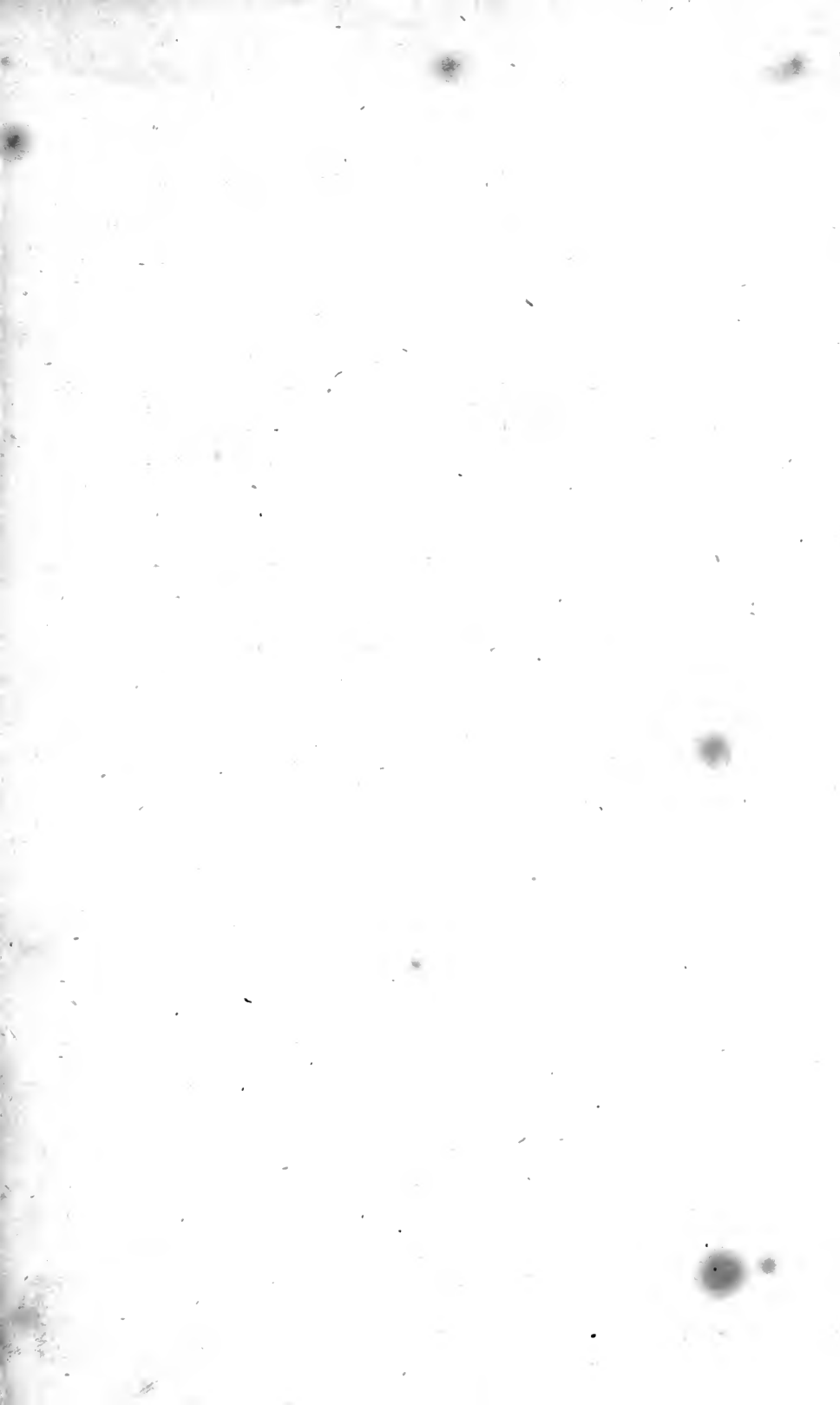


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HISTORICAL DRAMA;

A SERIES OF

National Tragedies,

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS
OF DIFFERENT EARLY ERAS IN BRITAIN.

BY
J. F. PENNIE.

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WISE MEN, in all ages, have agreed to make it, what in truth it ought to
be, a supplement to the Pulpit."—ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

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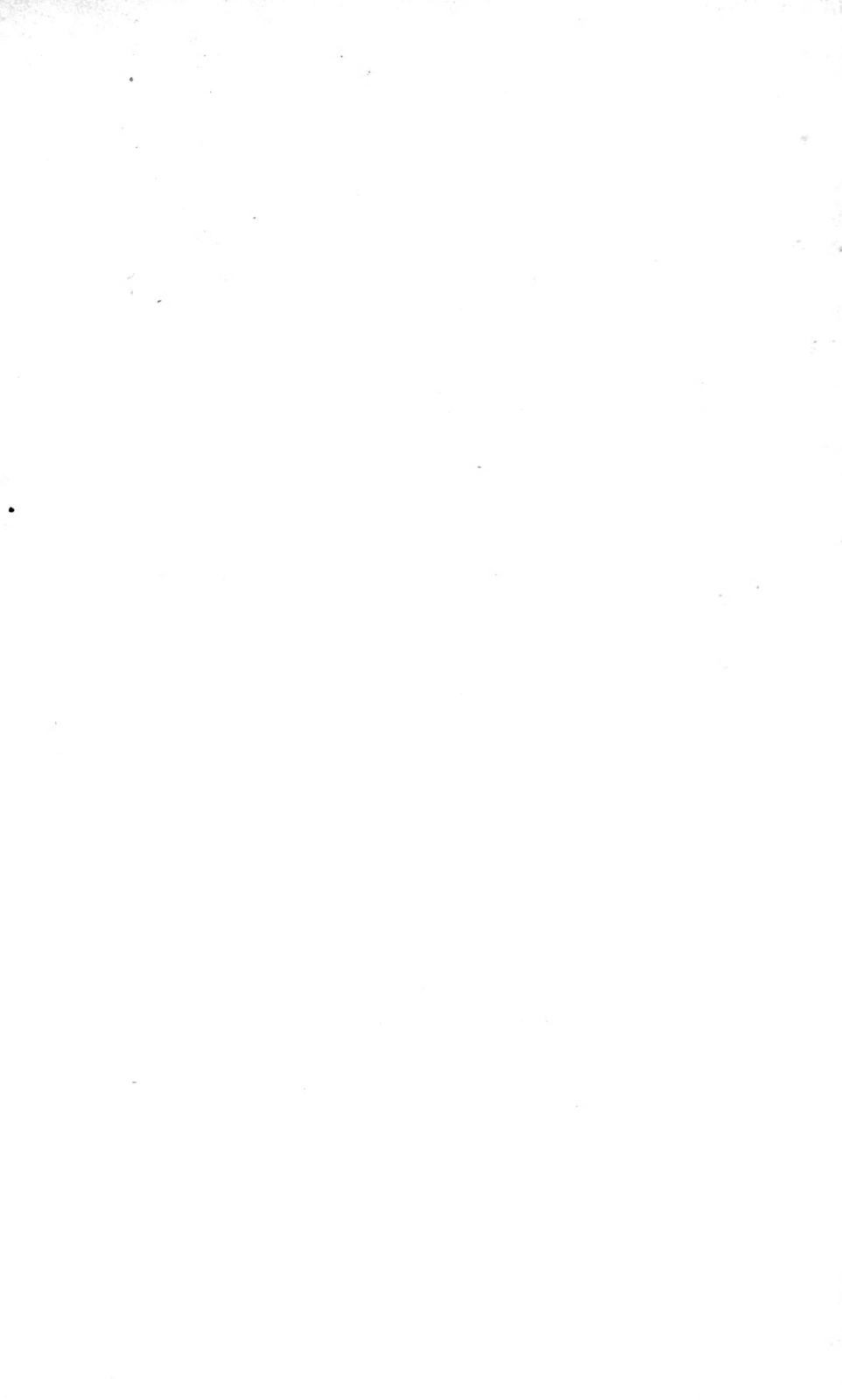
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ERRATA.

<i>Page 3, line 23, for</i>	Mandubrog,	<i>read</i>	Cymbaline.
" 11, " 29, " nation,	"	"	nations.
" 13, " 15, " flatterer,	"	"	flatter.
" 102, " 4, " hostages send	"	"	send hostages.
" 131, " 38, for What fearful groan was that?		<i>read</i>	Woe worth the hour.
" 185, " 6, for evil,		<i>read</i>	coil.
" 226, " 12, " strong,	"	"	strongly.
" 234, " 10, " Mercians,	"	"	Mercian.
" 234, " 19, " chief,	"	"	chiefs.
" 245, " 23, " tae,	"	"	take.
" 329, " 26, " the,	"	"	their.
" 368, " 29, " fountain	"	"	fountains.
" 418, " 15, " and Etheling,	"	"	and the Etheling.
" 420, " 7, " earlessly,	"	"	fearlessly.
" 519, " 10, " his,	"	"	this.

CONTENTS.

Dedication	Page iii
Preface	v
ARIXINA ; a Tragedy	1
Notes to ditto	121
EDWIN AND ELGIYA ; a Tragedy	141
Notes to ditto	251
THE IMPERIAL PIRATE ; a Tragedy	265
Notes to ditto	385
THE DRAGON KING ; a Tragedy	411
Notes to ditto	523



TO

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIRE,

When, on commencing this work, I received permission to dedicate it to your MAJESTY, I was not insensible that, while it demanded my profoundest gratitude, the value of such illustrious patronage must ever far exceed my warmest acknowledgments. Nobly fulfilling the duties of your exalted station, and evincing a truly paternal regard for the people over whom Providence has placed you, I felt that my performance, however humble in itself, would have a lustre shed on it by the encouragement your MAJESTY has been pleased to give to a work, which, professing to record, in a dramatic form, the manners, customs, and religious institutions of our early ancestors, might be entitled to the epithet of NATIONAL.

It was the noble ambition of one of those heroes who figure in the following pages, to render the fleets of Britain, at a very early period, triumphant masters of the ocean, and by

their superior power secure her glorious independence. The annals of the British navy stand pre-eminent as a portion of our national history ; and England has the proud delight to acknowledge your MAJESTY as one of those defenders who have stood forward to maintain the honour of her flag on the boisterous element.

That affection for your MAJESTY's person which was so universally manifested on your accession to the throne, has since risen to a degree of enthusiastic attachment, never surpassed, if equalled, during any period of Britain's history.

That this love and veneration may never cease while your MAJESTY sways the British sceptre,—that your life may be long preserved,—and that every earthly blessing may attend a Monarch whose greatest happiness consists in the promotion of his subjects' welfare,—is the earnest prayer of

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most humble Servant,

And dutiful Subject,

J. F. PENNIE.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Tragedies are intended to form a portion of a National Dramatic Work; not merely devoted to the purposes of illustrating certain particular events, which stand like lofty and isolated rocks amid the downward rolling stream of British history, but also to display a faithful picture of the manners, customs, and religious observances of those various nations that have successively obtained the possession and dominion of this island.

As far as I have any acquaintance with dramatic writings, no similar work has ever yet been published.

We have, it is true, several old, neglected plays, relating to the British, Saxon, and Danish dynasties, but wholly unconnected by anything like an historic series, while, at the same time, almost all the dramas of which I possess any knowledge have in their characters—no matter when their era, or where their scenes of action are laid—the manners, feelings, institutions, and usages which belong to the age and country of their respective authors. This applies not only to the Shakspearian era of dramatic composition in England, but also to all subsequent periods, and to all civilized countries where the drama has been cherished. In confirmation of this we need only refer to Dryden's plays, and to most of the French, Italian, and German productions of the stage.

I cannot do better, the more fully to elucidate my design in this work, than quote, before I proceed any farther, a passage from the *Revue Encyclopédique*.

‘An extra condition is now imposed upon dramatic poets, and the severity with which it is enacted, in the opinion of certain critics, is a proof of an evident tendency towards mental perfection,—we mean the conditions of local verity. They wish tragedy to be at once a source of *instruction* and *study*—not only to present a general portrait of the passions, but to be a faithful image of THE MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE from whence its subject is drawn: they wish it to be characteristic of the institutions, the opinions, and the prejudices of nations. They allow the poet to create events, but when once he has chosen his scene of action, they require an exact description of the country, and a rigid historical truth in the accessories; in short, they require his picture to be a perfect resemblance of its model. This exaction is far from blameable, and this passion for truth reflects honour on the age. In admitting how much it increases the merit of the picture, we must nevertheless observe that it demands a profound knowledge of the theatre, and a most delicate tact to employ it well. The manners, the customs, and the language of certain nations of antiquity, and even of those of some more modern ones, are imbued with a stamp of rusticity that shocks the delicacy of more civilized people. To repeat upon the stage the vulgar abuse which Homer’s heroes address to each other,—to rake up, as some German authors do, the contemptible relics, the pitiful quodlibets, of the heroes of the feudal ages,—to hear these by the lowest of the low, in language which would disgust our ears, in any situation within a theatre, for the sake of preserving a

local verity, is what no man in his senses requires, or would tolerate. The observance of the local verity presents another equally great difficulty to surmount. The poet risks, in conforming himself to it, becoming unintelligible.'

I am not conscious in the following work of taking greater liberties with history than all authors have hitherto done before me, in dramatic composition, and others are still doing in the form of historical romance. And here I would observe that it is not my intention, should these Tragedies be favourably received by the public, to dramatize some story selected out of every king's reign known in British history, like Neele's Romances, but merely to take such portions of that history as are, I conceive, best suited to develop my plan, and at such distant periods from each other as I may think proper; yet so to be connected as to exhibit a diorama of those great changes which have taken place and followed each other, with regard to dynasties, manners, and religious institutions, during a long succession of years, down which has descended the turbulent stream of our national annals.

I am well aware that this is a task of considerable magnitude, requiring great labour of research, united with poetical and dramatic ability, to render it in any way a work that shall be pleasing and amusing, as well as instructive and useful, without descending to ribaldry and those flashes of pernicious wit, which, though often brilliant, blast, like the lightning, the delicate flowers of innocence and virtue, and destroy, as far as its fatal influence extends, that bulwark of society—good morals.

That a wide taste for dramatic literature (whatever may be the opinion of certain persons) will ever cease to exist, I cannot for a moment believe. Our fondness

for a full display of the different characters of mankind, of every grade, in all their varied shades and lights, arising from the good and the evil passions of the heart, which is the peculiar province of the drama to pourtray, and which is not in the power of history to accomplish, must, as long as nature exists, and man delights to study the noblest work of his Creator, ever be to the young and the old, the polished and the rude, the most interesting, the most lasting, the most rational, and the most universal amusement. To reason otherwise would be to assert that the unrivalled Dramatist of Nature, Shakspeare himself, will cease to be read and esteemed,—that he will sink into utter oblivion, and be, ere long, as much despised and forgotten as the authors of giant stories for the nursery.

But I would ask—can characters that never existed on earth, save in the poet's imagination, create in his reader a higher interest than the renowned of antiquity, who have not only actually lived, but were persons of great power and influence in their day and generation, and the cause of those mighty changes, both in state and religion, which have continually been taking place ever since Britain has obtained a name among the nations. If we know but little of those times and those characters, the more ought our curiosity to be awakened, and our interest excited, by an attempt to penetrate the obscurity that has so long hung over them; and every endeavour which aims to clothe them, by the aid of ancient chronicles, in their various attributes, and animate them with those passions which are consistent with what is recorded of their actions, must be accounted laudable.

Whitaker, speaking of Hume, says, ‘He advances a

position, *convenient, perhaps, for himself*, but certainly unjust in its nature, that the history of nations in their infancy is not worthy a recital; as if the commencement of civil life, the dawn of the arts, and the rise of literature, were not incidents as important and interesting as the posterior account of them, their occasional eclipses, or accidental illuminations.

‘By this means, the whole portion of our history, which (as I have formerly remarked) is **THE MOST IMPORTANT IN ALL OUR ANNALS**, is consigned over to neglect and carelessness, as unworthy a man of genius for its writer, and incapable of affording entertainment and instruction to the reader. And a strong brand is fixed upon that period of our annals, which is (as I may say) the great seed-plot of our national history, as it gives us the origin and institution of all our government, all our civility, and all our religion; and is therefore fraught with infinite variety of instruction and pleasure to the man, the Christian, and the critic.’

In addition to such authority as the foregoing, I have the satisfaction of quoting a few observations from the prospectus of a forthcoming work, illustrative of Anglo-Saxon literature, by the Rev. Dr. Grundtvig, of Copenhagen, whose laudable efforts will, I hope, be crowned with the success that such an undertaking deserves.

‘If it should appear—as experience will clearly prove—that these very Anglo-Saxons have exercised a far greater influence over the modern civilized world, than even their illustrious descendants; and if the literary relics of this people form some of the most invaluable documents and records we possess for the Universal History of mankind—then, I say, it will be still more astonishing that a nation, so acute and so enlightened as the

English, should have chanced to overlook a source from whence they might have derived both credit and profit to themselves. And if, again, this Anglo-Saxon literature, far from being the dull and stupid trash which some English writers of no small name have chosen to suppose, should of itself make up a body of amusement and instruction, deserving, on its own account, the attention and admiration of cultivated minds, it may be no fantastic hope of mine, perhaps, that England will one day regret the neglect and unkindness she has shown to her high-born and honourable kinsmen, and atone for it by "one stride equal to many mincing steps."

'With Theodore of Greece and Adrian of Africa, classical literature, in the full extent to which it was then cultivated, was introduced into England ; and from the beginning of the eighth century to the end of the eleventh she appears—not even excluding a comparison with the Eastern Empire—to have been the most truly civilized country on the globe. It was here that a whole nation listened to the songs of Cædmon and of Alcuin in their mother tongue, while in France and Italy nothing was heard but a jargon of barbarous sounds. It was here that, in the eighth century, Beda and Alcuin shed a lustre, by their classical attainments, over the whole of Europe ; and it was from hence that Charlemagne, the sovereign of the greater portion of the Western World, was compelled to seek for an instructor. Even in these facts there is something dazzling, something which arrests the attention, and demands the homage of our respect ; but, what is far more memorable and important in its consequences, it was Anglo-Saxon missionaries who carried Christianity to Germany and the North of Europe—missionaries from a country which, having a literature of its own, in

a language akin to that of Germany and Scandinavia, made that literature the example, and that school the pattern, of all the early literary attempts of those parts of the world.'

So much for the Anglo-Saxons. And can there be nothing said for the Britons, their predecessors in the dominion of this island, who have been superciliously styled the rudest barbarians? The Britons barbarians? They merit not such obloquy, although it has been cast upon them by the ignorance or pride of the far greater number of our historians and antiquaries; from which they have, however, been nobly rescued by the impartial and erudite pen of Dr. Henry, and the learned and sensible author of the History of Manchester.

The Britons had their supreme Pen-teyrn, Dictator, or Emperor, who reigned over all the tribes; they had their provincial kings, their nobles, their freemen, and caeths, or slaves; and their institutions were perfectly feudal, and very similar to the Normans, as may be seen by referring to the code of Welch laws, derived from the most ancient customs of the early Cymry. They formed a vast population, as Cæsar and Diodorus both assure us; they had numerous towns, hill cities, and immense fortifications, which time has not, or ever will, destroy,—temples and altars, which, to this day, strike the beholder with wonder and awe at their Cyclopæan magnitude and grandeur, and which, with their fragments of glass vessels, beads, weapons of brass, &c.*, show, beyond all contradiction, that the mechanical arts had arrived in this

* See Leland, ix., and Iten. Curio., p. 55, for British brass kettles; and for their brass weapons, Borlase Deo Nicæus, that the Caledonians have brass balls affixed to the end of their spears.

island, long before the invasion of the Romans, to a high state of perfection.

The Britons had a regularly established priesthood, whose religion was celebrated with such pomp, that Pliny says—‘*Britannia hodieque eam (magiam) attonite celebrare tantis cæremoniis ut eam Persis dedisse videri possit.*’ And though I doubt that Britain was the *cradle* in which the superstitions of the east were nursed,—rather believing the exact contrary of this,—yet the philosophy of the Druids was as extensive as their power. They were lawgivers, physiologists *, mathematicians, physicians, geographers, theologicians, and astronomers, while their wisdom and knowledge of the arts and sciences made them far renowned, and drew to their schools, as Cæsar testifies, all the noble youth of the continent.

The Britons were the first who divided this country into cymmwd, commots, and cantrifs; each having its own distinct court of law, in which was a regular administration of justice, being held on the side or top of a hill, within a small amphitheatre of turf or stone. Such was the mount of the *Keys* in the Isle of Man. One of these courts of justice is still to be seen, in the most perfect preservation, on a hill to the north of the village of West Lulworth, in Dorsetshire. It is formed of a deep circular vallum of earth, surrounded with a shallow dyke, and has an entrance facing the east. The Britons had also an excellent code of national laws, collected and founded by Dyfnwal Moelmundd, from which it is quite clear that Alfred the Great drew his noble institutions, translating them into Saxon from the Latin of Gildas. An eminent sage of the law has affirmed, ‘that the ancient Britons,

* *Ea divinationum ratio, &c. &c.* See Davies, p. 44.

before they ever were subdued by the Romans, were in possession of that admirable system of jurisprudence the present common law of England, and that no material changes have been made in the system either by the Romans, Saxons, Danes, or Normans.'

These Britons had also their *senatus consultum*, or assemblies of wise men and elders, who formed the laws and governed the country, but whose decrees were of no effect till ratified by the king, who, notwithstanding, could neither make nor abrogate any laws without the consent of the national assembly. The ardent love of liberty, honour, and warlike glory burned as brightly in the bosoms of the Celtic tribes as in those of any of the successive generations that have arisen in this island, and inspired them to deeds worthy of the highest fame.

Let us, then, hear no more of the old Roman affectation and shallow cant which ignorantly pretends to cast the disgrace of savage barbarity on the ancient Britons, whose venerable relics give such aspersions the lie, and proclaim them to have been a noble and a mighty people.

But to return to the design of the present work : if a drama can be made, 'as in a glass,'

'To show the very age and body o' th' time,
Its form and pressure,'

the further it dives into the rich mines of antiquity, pioneered by authorities, the more must our knowledge, at least, be enlarged ; and if, added to this, the poet can by his art contrive to produce a strong concern in his reader for the fate of his characters, and render his incidents striking and effective, such a work will not only be instructive, but interesting in the highest degree. Ages long buried in oblivion pass in review before us, and we

behold the world as it was a thousand years ago! Who can contemplate such a picture without deep emotions of pleasure, wonder, gratitude, and triumph,—wonder at the past, and gratitude for the present. If there be any one so dead to noble feelings, I envy not his mind let him be who he may;—he would wander through the venerated ruins of an Herculaneum and a Thebes with indifference; he would cast a look of contempt on the tumulus of Achilles, and contemplate, without a sigh to the fallen brave, the plains of Marathon and the pass of Thermopylæ.

Whoever pretended there was no interest in the Roman Father, Brutus, Virginius, Cymbeline, Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale, Caractacus, Hamlet, Macbeth, and numerous other dramas, because the eras in which their characters lived are far removed from the present period? Indeed, the action of most of those pieces is of an age anterior to the invasion of Cæsar, which are the remotest times to which we have, in the present work, gone back. But let it be remembered that in nearly all of those plays, exhibiting talent of the first order, and which will never cease to be read while a taste for literature has an existence, there is little or no due keeping, no vivid colouring of manners and national customs, which, had they been judiciously interwoven with the thread of the plot, would have been like the gold and silver gleaming through the splendid tapestry of the ancients, and have thrown a tenfold charm over those delightful productions. Dr. Johnson says, that the distance of country wherein the scenes of a drama are laid, allows the manners of the characters to be *falsified*, as well as the incidents feigned: and the celebrated Racine affirms, that *remoteness of place* affords the same conve-

niences to the poet as *length of time*. This silly doctrine, like many others, has had its day; but no poet of the present age, I should imagine, would venture to adopt it, either with regard to place or time; or if he did, his productions must meet with that neglect and contempt which they would justly merit, and he himself be despised for his ignorance.

Can Pizarro, a German play, which faintly attempts to delineate the customs of the Peruvians (similar in many parts of their religion to the Celtæ), those savages of another world, awaken a higher degree of interest in an English audience? And shall the customs, superstitions, and warlike deeds of the ancient Britons, whose name we bear, and with whom we love to assimilate ourselves, as if they were actually our ancestors,—whose Druids stood high in the scale of civilization, and whose noble struggles for their country's liberty entitle them to our admiration and respect,—shall these, in scenes and times of heroic glory, excite no curiosity, awaken no feelings of sympathy, because they belong to a more distant age? Can we be gratified with a dramatic display of the actions of certain heroes of the Greek and Roman nations, who, though perhaps more refined and enlightened, were not more brave, nor half so virtuous as the Anglo-Saxons, yet pretend utter apathy and disregard to the customs, rights, and political struggles of our forefathers when moulded in a similar form—those warriors whose valour obtained for us the land we live in, whose laws and institutions we to this day follow, and to whom we are indebted for many of our dearest rights and privileges! If it *can* be so, then by the very same rule, and by just as wise reasoning, we ought to discard all knowledge of the early history of our country, despise the

beautiful fictions of antiquity, and becoming at once downright blockheads, shut out for ever Homer and Ossian from our studies, and, above all, fling Milton into the fire, seeing the period of his tale, its characters, scenes, and manners, are in part even before time itself began, and all the rest of an anterior date to the story of any other acknowledged poet in existence.

But I would hope better things of the present enlightened period, which lays claim to the title of the Augustan age of literature, in spite of what has been advanced to the contrary by a few, who, in their own weak imaginations, believe themselves to be the wise *par excellence*; and cannot think that the DESIGN of the present work, whatever failings may be discovered in its execution, will meet with neglect and contempt from a discerning and candid public. Surely the attempt to excite a due regard and taste for our national antiquities, to scatter the flowers of poesy on the dark and rugged fragments of other ages, however imperfectly performed, is at least praiseworthy, and merits encouragement rather than reprehension. On such a subject I shall briefly speak in the words of a modern writer: 'However difficult my task, I am emboldened by the confidence I feel in the candour with which the good and enlightened do ever regard the experimental efforts of those who wish in any degree to enlarge the sources of pleasure and instruction among men.'

N.B.—By an unfortunate mistake in sending the MSS. to the Printer, the chronological order of the Tragedies is subverted: 'Edwin and Elgiva,' instead of being the second piece, should have stood the last in the Volume.

A R I X I N A.

A TRAGEDY.

‘ Witness, Rome,
Who saw’st thy Cæsar from the naked land,
Whose only fort was British hearts, repell’d
To seek Pharsalian wreaths.’

THOMSON’S *Liberty*.

‘ And thou, O Julius, whose embattled host
First shook Invasion’s scourge on Albion’s coast,
Say, when from Cassibellan’s agile car
Flash’d the just vengeance of defensive war;
Say, did ye deem that e’er the painted race,
In distant times, your shore remote should trace,
Chase from your far-famed towers Oppression’s doom,
Restore your wasted fields, protect the walls of Rome?’

PYE’S *Carmen Seculare*.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ROMANS.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

TIBERIUS RUFUS.

ATRIUS, Lieutenant to Cæsar.

VALERIUS, a Tribune.

VENTIDIUS.

CLAUDIA.

LAVINIA.

Officers, Lictors, Roman Soldiers, &c.

BRITONS.

CASSFELYN, or Brazen Helmet, (the Brennin, or chief king of Britain.)

CYMBALINE, rightful heir to the British throne, } Nephews to
THEOMANTIUS, his younger brother. } Cassfelyn.

The Arch-Druid.

CARVILIUS, king of the Belgæ, or the Carvillii.

EWYLLLEN, friend to Cymbaline.

DUNVALLO, king of Cornwall.

CINGETONIX, prince of Kent.

TOGORMA, king of Dimetia, or South Wales.

VORTIMER.

UTHYR, a child, son of Arixina and Mandubrog.

ARIXINA SINGETONA, High-Priestess of Melcom, or the Sun.

DALTHULA, a Virgin of the Sun.

Druids, British Soldiers, &c.

ARIXINA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Interior of the Roman Camp at
Rutupæ, or Richborough.*

Enter Claudia and Lavinia from opposite sides.

LAVINIA.

FRIEND of my bosom, say what sudden joy
Spreads o'er thy cheek young beauty's richest glow,
And from thy dark-orbed eye outflashing shines
Like day's first beams of glory?

CLAUDIA.

O, Lavinia,
Thou for the noisy camp, the din of arms,
And unknown horrors of a savage land,
Filled with barbarians, quitt'st thy palace-home
To share my exile from the Ausonian clime,
And soothe my sorrows.—How can I repay
Thy unexampled friendship!—Thou hast shared
My early joys, and now partak'st my woes.—
But talk of woes no more—for I have seen
The noble, god-like youth, whom to behold
Is ecstasy, is all that poets dream
Of bright Elysium! and again have heard
The music-tones of his enchanting voice,
Far sweeter than Apollo's golden lyre.

Yes, he is here—I breathe with him once more
The same blest atmosphere—and did I call
This island savage?—Oh, to me 'tis heaven!
Rome, without him, is but a wilderness;
While Arab deserts his loved smile would change
To Hesperian climes, and isle-bowers of the blest!

LAVINIA.

Speak'st thou of Cymbaline?

CLAUDIA.

Ay, of whom else
Could I thus speak? the gallant British prince,
Who from his stern usurping uncle—now
The king of this new world—for refuge fled
To Cæsar and to Rome; where soon he found
In Cæsar a protector and a friend.

LAVINIA.

Would you had never seen this Celtic prince!

CLAUDIA.

Then had these eyes, Lavinia, ne'er beheld
The paragon of men; then had this heart (1)
Ne'er throbb'd with that wild passion which in words
Finds no expression, filling all the soul
With burning rapture, and whose shortest moments
Repay long years of suffering. Let me still
Endure the pangs of disappointed love,
Till tears and sorrow dim these eyes, and pale
My youthful cheek, and lay my wasted frame
In an untimely grave. Can I repent
Those hours of bliss which have been, when 'twas heaven
But to behold him, though far off, and catch
The faintest sound of his joy-yielding voice,
The tones of which were lavished on some ear
That felt no music in them?

LAVINIA.

Still I say
You had been happy had you never met.

CLAUDIA.

Ay, negatively happy—a poor state
Of ease and stupid quiet, like a lake,
Forest-embosomed, whose weed-covered surface
Tempests nor sunlight visits.—I, Lavinia,
Would rather feel the whirlwind and the storm
Roar round me, so anon, betwixt the clouds,
The sun of passionate love its hottest beams
Flung on my bosom, warming all my soul
To wild delirious rapture.

LAVINIA.

Well I know
Your ardent feelings revel in those joys,
Heedless of dangers, which romantic love
Yields his enchanted votaries.

CLAUDIA.

Oh, 'tis bliss
Still, still to think on our first meeting-hour
Amid the golden palaces of Rome,
Where all was boundless splendour, all was joy,
Music, and feast, and dance.—Oh, how unlike
The simple dwellings of these island kings!—
Though dazzled with the vast magnificence
Of Roman conquerors, still the British prince
Moved, spoke, and shone amid the crowded pomp,
Like the bright spirit of some mighty hero
Raised to the Olympian halls of thund'ring Jove,
A deified companion for the gods!

LAVINIA.

And is the prince arrived in Cæsar's camp?

CLAUDIA.

Yes, he again to Britain is returned.
I saw him as I entered standing near
The eagles and the altars of the gods.

LAVINIA.

Remember, Claudia, you are wedded now
To stern Tiberius Rufus—as a wife
Preserve thy yet unspotted honour pure,
And banish from thy heart this British chief.

CLAUDIA.

Never in word or thought, much less in deed,
Will I dishonour him who is my husband—
But love for him I neither feel nor feign—
I wear no mask of falsehood.—Well he knows
That on my bright and happy morn of life
He dash'd despair's dark cloud; and joy's young sun
Can never shine again!—Did not my sire
Drag me, regardless of my prayers and tears,
To Hymen's shrine? and did not this Tiberius,
Pernicious ruffian, seize my hand, and make
By force the priest unite us, though I poured
My curses deep and loud on all around,
Till e'en the very statues of the gods
Shook as if horror-struck! while omens dire
The altar-victims gave!—Oh, it was I
That was the victim! I was sacrificed
To a stern heartless villain, who t' indulge
His own desires, reckless what I endured,
Stamped a base rape with holy marriage rites!

LAVINIA.

And well I know his jealousy it was
Which prompted him to bring thee to the camp,

Making thee follow Cæsar to these wars,
Waged in an unknown land of fierce barbarians.

CLAUDIA.

Ay, but the marksman hath outshot himself
With his own bow, for Cymbaline is here !

LAVINIA.

What canst thou hope for now from seeing him ?

CLAUDIA.

Indeed I know not—Oh, I am wild with joy
That I have once more gazed upon his form !
Mine he can never be—for virtue still
Hath a firm hold upon me.—Yet 'tis bliss,
A bliss which none can feel but such as love
With that unbounded passion I have done,
To look but on his shadow, as he moves,
A war-god in the sun, whose beams I envy
As they the plumes of his bright helmet kiss.—
And yet this joy dies into deep despair
When I upon my wretched marriage think !

LAVINIA.

Think of thy husband, Claudia.

CLAUDIA.

Do not my wrongs
Make guiltless all I feel for Cymbaline ?
Let me not think on *them*, or I am lost !—
O, that I from this struggling heart could rend
The now unholy passion, though its strings
Were torn with it asunder ! I would die,
Perish at once, rather than live dishonour'd—
But oh this love—this passion-flame—this madness,
In spite of reason and of virtue, conquers,
And death alone can quench the rising flames
That burn within my bosom !

(*Flourish of martial music.*)

LAVINIA.

Hark ! those trumpets speak
The approach of Cæsar and the Roman chiefs.

*Trumpets and horns.—Enter Standard-bearers with
Ensigns and Eagles. The Lictors with the fasces,
Cæsar, Tiberius Rufus, Atrius, Tribunes of the
army, Officers, and Roman soldiers.—Claudia
and Lavinia retire up the stage.*

CÆSAR.

Once more we plant our footsteps on these shores,
And lift our eagles of dominion where
Only the far-adventuring merchant-bark
Has traded for base profit.—We are come
To win the trophies of immortal fame,
The soldier's glory and the Roman's pride.—
Yes, we, my gallant bands, again have crossed
The wide and stormy ocean, here resolved
Bravely to win a new and unknown world,
For which great Alexander wept in vain.

TIBERIUS.

Thou hast no need to weep like that mad Greek ;
There's a wide field before thee.—Thou wilt find
These Britons, if I err not, better warriors
Than Alexander met on Asia's plains.

CÆSAR.

And therefore are they worthier of my sword ;
Worthy to cope with these my legions, who
In Gaul, Iberia, and Germanian wilds,
Have fought and won as bright and noble wreaths
As ever flourished on a Roman's brows.
Oh, 'tis my glory in the field to meet
These northern savages, whose greatest pride

Is their high freedom.—Not a soldier here
Feels prouder to be citizen of Rome,
Than they do of their wild inheritance
Of rocks, and woods, and caves.—Each has the fire
Of Brutus burning in his manly heart ;
And noble 'tis to meet such men in arms,
Who, shouting liberty, like lions fight,
And fearlessly the death of heroes die ! (2)
'Tis on the conquest of such gallant spirits
That I would build my fame—Let who will war
With the white-livered slaves of eastern kings,
Cæsar would conquer men.

TIBERIUS.

And noble 'tis,
No doubt, in Cæsar such heroic tribes
'T' exterminate—lay waste with fire and sword
Their dear-loved country, and vile slavery's chains
Bind round the necks of those his falchion spares.

CÆSAR.

Tiberius Rufus, I do know thee well—
Thou hast as true a Roman heart as e'er
Beat high for Roman honour and renown.
But though thy sword strikes bravely on our side,
Still art thou carping at our great designs.
And with a cynic sternness strivest to cast
A cold, dark cloud on all those mighty plans
This bosom labours with ; which when achieved
Shall throw such glory on imperial Rome
As will the nation dazzle, while they gaze,
In awe and wonder wrapt, upon her power,
Making the old, with this new world, bow down
And worship her refulgence.

TIBERIUS.

Worship Cæsar,
Decked with imperial pomp!—Do I not read
Rightly the import of thy lofty thoughts?—
Thy pardon if I err.

CÆSAR.

Tiberius, nor thy scorn
Nor thy unjust suspicions stir my spirit.
I love immortal Rome dear as I love
My own renown, in spite of all her factions.
Nor do I wish to hide from friend or foe
That passion for high fame and gallant daring
Which burns within my bosom.—O, these eyes
Have tears of envy and of self-reproach
Wept o'er the page where live the peerless deeds
Of Alexander, whose immortal name
Flings through the gloomy shadows of the past,
Like an eternal fire, its beams of glory,
A bright example to the warrior's spirit.

TIBERIUS.

His glory was the tyrant's lust of power,
Centred within himself.—To poorly win
The phantom of renown he spilt the blood
Of guiltless millions!—Living he performed
Not one deed truly great, and having won
The empire of the world, died—like a fool.

CÆSAR.

Let me but to remotest time be made
The poet's and historian's lofty theme;
Let age to age my numerous conquests tell,
And that I conquered still t' improve mankind,
Ranking me next to Philip's warlike son;
And wheresoe'er my shade below shall wander,

No joy the bright Elysian bowers can yield
Will equal that proud ecstasy to learn
My battle-deeds shed glory on the tale
Of Rome, when all her power and pomp are dust,
And she, like mighty Babylon of old,
Is but a name on earth !

TIBERIUS.

Psha ! idle dreams !

Useless, if realized.—What's earthly fame
To a poor shadowy ghost in Pluto's realms ?
I pant for no distinction after death—
Give me the high distinction, while I live,
Of a free mind, that will not crouch in fear
E'en to the greatest yet of woman born,
No, nor the proudest flatterer ; and I reck not
Though with my steeds and dogs, when I am dead,
My name rot in oblivion.

[*Claudia and Lavinia come forward.*

Claudia here !—

What means thy presence where Rome's warriors meet
To plan high schemes of conquest, and prepare
For scenes of bloody strife ? Go to thy tent.

CLAUDIA.

Why should my presence vex thee ? Hast thou not
Made me thy wife, Tiberius ? brought me here
To be a follower of great Cæsar's camp,
And mix with warrior-men in scenes of death ?
Although a woman, in my bosom beats
A Roman heart that glories in the deeds
Of Rome's brave heroes ; and, since thou hast made
A soldier of me, doubtless I have right
To mingle in these councils, and partake,

Chieftains, of all your honours, as, perforce,
I share your toils and dangers.

TIBERIUS.

Woman, peace !

Or thou wilt make me think thy wits are marred.
We want no Amazonians in our ranks,
And wish, still less, to have them for our wives—
Retire to thy pavilion.

CÆSAR.

Noble Claudia,

Stay thou, and grace this meeting with thy presence ;
I joy that thou art with us to behold
The deeds of Romans in this land of battles.
To thee a noble principedom shall be given,
And thou a fairer Cleopatra reign
In this new world, than shines in Egypt's halls.

TIBERIUS.

She shall not borrow light of thee to shine—
No lending wives for me to friend or foe.
I hate such Grecian customs from my soul.
I'd rather plant my dagger in her heart !
Nor, while I husband her, shall she have rule
In any world where I am.—Gods ! must I find
Cæsar a rival too ? (*Aside.*)

CÆSAR.

I do request,

Tiberius, she may tarry yet awhile—
And let me, lady, introduce to thee
The young and noble Prince of this great Isle,
Whom his usurping uncle hath deposed,
And who, by us, shall be restored to power,
And made the tributary lord of Britain.
See ! he is here.

Enter Cymbaline and Theomantius in Roman habits.

TIBERIUS.

Destruction fasten on him !

How did the gay, voluptuous savage 'scape,
Amid the Alps, the daggers of my slaves ? (*Aside.*)

CYMBALINE.

Hail, mighty Cæsar !—(*starts.*) Ha ! all-gracious gods !
Whom do these eyes behold on Albion's shores ?
Have I fair Claudia found mid noisy camps
And councils of stern warriors ?

TIBERIUS.

Ay, young Prince,

But not to meet thee did she hither come.
She is a follower of the camp, to wait
On me—her husband—and perform my bidding.
Claudia, retire this instant to thy tent ;
It is my absolute command.—Away !

CYMBALINE.

False Claudia ! she is wedded then, I see,
And cannot now be mine.—I'll strive to repay
Her treachery with that scorn it justly merits.

[*Claudia, as she makes her exit with Lavinia, exchanges
looks with Cymbaline, who casts on her an upbraid-
ing glance.*

CÆSAR.

(*To the Prince.*) Dost thou know Claudia ?

CYMBALINE.

(*With seeming carelessness.*) I have, noble chief,
Met the fair lady in the festive crowd,
Mid the resplendent palaces of Rome.

TIBERIUS.

But I will take good care thou meet'st her not
In these thy native forests. (*Aside.*)

CÆSAR.

Let that pass.—

Right welcome to thy kingdom, injured Prince.
With welcome, also, we thy brother greet :
He shall to all his honours be restored,
And thou, by this strong arm of power enthroned,
Sway the chief sceptre o'er the Island kings.

THEOMANTIUS.

Thanks to great Cæsar, we shall quickly win
Ample revenge by his victorious sword.

CYMBALINE.

My everlasting thanks to mighty Cæsar,
Thanks to the Roman Senate, who are still
Friends of the oppressed, and guardians of the world,
We now shall gain our birthright, and, once more,
Dwell in our fathers' halls, from which Cassfelyn
Drove us to seek for aid from thee in Gaul.
Thy arms have conquered millions ! None can stand
Against thy legions in the battle-day.—
I well remember how the German hordes
Rush'd o'er the plains of Gaul, and how they fell
Before thy sword, on the Rhine's crimson banks,
In mountain piles !—O, I can ne'er forget
The hour of triumph, when thou first didst cross
That boisterous river, which no Roman chief
Had ever passed before.—

TIBERIUS.

True, but his stay
On th' other side, methought, was somewhat short.

CYMBALINE.

Yet long enough to win eternal fame !
And conquer nations ne'er by other power
Conquered before !—The bravest, fiercest tribes

Yielded their country, and in terror fled.—
The gallant passage of that mighty stream
Alone, shall an illustrious triumph be
To Cæsar through all ages!

TIBERIUS.

O, how sweet
This honied flattery is to Cæsar's ear!
His soul feeds on it like the hungry vulture
On stinking carcasses. (*Aside.*)

CYMBALINE.

But O, what glory now shall Cæsar win,
For having crossed the western ocean's surge,
And planted Rome's proud eagles on the shores
Of a fair world, till late to Rome unknown!
Who here shall stand before him? Not Cassfelyn,
Though to the field he lead the bravest sons
Of valour found in Britain.—Gallant Cæsar,
Kneeling before thee, and thy chiefs, and all
Yon host, we, by thy country's victor-gods,
Those sacred standards, swear to hold these realms
In amity with Rome—nor do we fear
Again to be deposed, while Rome shall own
Us her ally, and Cæsar call us friend.

TIBERIUS.

Methinks you need not in such haste have been
To swear to Rome allegiance for your kingdom.
You might have waited till your throne were won,
And Cæsar could bestow it.

CYMBALINE.

What Cæsar wills
Must be performed, and Fate herself obeys him.

TIBERIUS.

What gross idolatry!—I'd rather be

A forest wolf, and on a desert hill
Behowl the midnight stars, than flatter e'en
The greatest man on earth, though all the world
Bowed at his footstool.

CÆSAR.

'Tis our will that thou
Shouldst sit upon thy father's ancient throne,
And rule these Island-realms as Rome's ally.—
Are not our scouts returned with news where lurks
The British army ?

ATRIUS.

No, mighty leader ;
The very tidings of thy preparation,
And second advent to this distant land,
Have struck such terror through its savage hordes,
That they will never dare again, in arms,
To meet thy vet'ran legions.—Not a man,
With steed or chariot, on their shores appeared
To hurl a lance, or draw a bow against
Our disembarking troops.

TIBERIUS.

No, they remember
When, with his sacred eagle in his grasp,
Scæusius, standard-bearer of the tenth
Brave legion, from the deck dash'd gallantly
Amid the waves, and rushed upon their ranks
Of iron chariots—shouting—' Romans, on !
Rescue your standard from the foe, or be
Disgraced for ever !—On, for Rome and glory !'
These coward Britons hide their heads in fear
Of such another onset.

CYMBALINE.

It is false !

TIBERIUS.

False!

CYMBALINE.

Ay, false as hell!—Britons were never cowards!
Never did a true Briton hide his head,
Or shrink from danger.—There is not a warrior
In all this great and noble Isle, but bears
A heart as valiant as the bravest Roman
That ever drew a sword for Rome and glory!
They will not hide their heads, though on these shores
A second time great Cæsar's banners float,
And none *but* Cæsar can their valour quell.

TIBERIUS.

Proud renegade! cast from thy country's bosom,
Thou, but a princely beggar, darest insult
A Roman citizen! I challenge thee
To single combat, and thy sword shall prove
The truth or falsehood of thy lofty boasting.
I've galled him to the soul—and if he's brave,
My own arm now shall yield me full revenge! (*Aside.*)

CYMBALINE.

Set out the lists amid the Roman camp,
And, in the sight of Cæsar and his host,
This sword shall prove thou hast belied my country,
Or that I am unworthy Cæsar's friendship.

CÆSAR.

We do forbid the battle—there shall be
No private feuds 'twixt Romans and brave friends,
While a new world before us lies unconquered.
When thou art seated on thy British throne
Thy pleasure be obeyed.

CYMBALINE.

I have beheld,
Imperator, the glory of thy arms,
With generous envy of thy matchless fame ;
I have beheld Rome's thousand palaces
Flashing in gilded pomp at sunset hour ;
In her refulgent Capitol have bowed
Before its golden shrines ; and I have gazed
Upon her dark-eyed beauties in their pride,
Assembled 'mid her splendid halls of state ;
Have, in her awful senate, sat enrapt
To hear her mighty orators display
The eloquence of gods (3)—and I admire
Not more the splendour of her gallant fame
Than her impartial justice ; while her genius,
Bright with refinement, sciences and arts,
O'er the dark midnight of barbarian lands
Sheds a diviner light than all her conquests !
But O, I love my own poor native isle
Dearer than all the gorgeous pomps of Rome,
Her dark-eyed beauties, noble hearts, and triumphs ;
And never will I, while one vital drop
Visits this patriot heart, with patient tameness
Hear her defamed, or by the proudest Roman
Called, what she ne'er will be while ocean floods
Engirdle her white cliffs—a recreant coward !

TIBERIUS.

Thou art at present safe.—A time may come——

CYMBALINE.

Safe ! what from thee, proud, lying Roman ? Safe !
I scorn all safety from such power as thine.
I am a Briton—prouder of that name

Than any title Romans can bestow ;
And soon a time *will* come when thou shalt feel
A Briton's vengeance !—O, I would forego
My birthright and my throne, and live in bonds
The basest slave, rather than not enjoy
The bliss of proving on thy cloven helm
That thou hast basely lied !

TIBERIUS.

I do not play
The woman with my tongue when passion moves me ;
Nor mouth out vauntings of my own exploits,
Therefore be sure, thou insolent savage, whom
Thy isle hath cast as filth from off her shores,
That I shall play the Roman with my sword,
Meet when we may,—and shouldst thou gain this throne,
Thy kingship, but a meteor of the fen,
Will, o'er the barbarous darkness of thy realm,
Shine its brief hour of twinkling pomp, and then
Fade, to be seen no more.

Enter Ventidius.

VENTIDIUS.

Most mighty Cæsar,
The men whom thou didst send as spies to find
The British army, are returned, and bring
News that a powerful host of many nations,
With harnessed steeds and chariots, are encamp'd
In a thick wood beyond the Stour's green banks.

CÆSAR.

How far from hence ?

VENTIDIUS.

Not six hours' march, my lord.
They by their various movements seem preparing

Hither to steal, beneath the shades of night,
And this our camp assail.—All the chief kings
O' th' south, 'tis said, are gathered there to fight
Beneath the imperial banners of Cassfelyn,
'Titled **THE BRAZEN HELMET**. In a skirmish
Four knights have been made prisoners; and no doubt
Will fall by the Druids' knives. (4)

CÆSAR.

By Hercules,
I'll rush upon these Britons in their camp,
Ere they stir forth—their blood-bespotted altars
Shall be o'erthrown; their dim, enchanted groves,
Beneath the axe, bow to th' immortal genius
Of mighty Rome, and on their Brazen Helm
This sword, in deadly thunder, soon shall clash!
Tiberius, and prince Cymbaline, forget
All private quarrels, and unite to spread
Rome's glorious conquests. O, my soul's on fire,
These warlike islanders again to meet
Amid the burning conflict! Atrius, thou
My good lieutenant, in my absence keep
Strict watch o'er all th' entrenchments.

ATRIUS.

Good my lord,
My utmost vigilance will be employed
To guard against surprise.

CÆSAR.

Ventidius, bid
The tribunes marshal instantly three legions
Of horse and foot, and let the guides attend;
Follow me, chiefs—
Awake the deep toned instruments of war,
And in their brazen clamour let thy voice,

All conquering Rome, strike terror to thy foes,
And sound the glory of thy fame abroad,
As the far pealing thunder-crash proclaims
The omnipotence of cloud-encircled Jove!

[*A grand flourish of martial music.—Exeunt Lictors,
Cæsar, Ventidius, Theomantius, Atrius, Officers,
Roman Soldiers with Eagles, &c.—Manet Cym-
baline and Tiberius Rufus.*]

CYMBALINE.

Thou wilt, ere long, behold these British warriors
Put forth the eagle beaks, and brazen horns
Of their strong helms against thee. (5)

TIBERIUS.

Ay, like snails,
To draw them in again at the first gleams
Our sunbright falchions shed.

CYMBALINE.

Thou'lt find them men—
Though they are rebels, I must do them justice;
They'll put thy Roman metal to the proof,
And show in battle they have lion hearts.
When this day's struggle for my rights is o'er,
We'll bravely meet as foes,—till then, Tiberius,
Let no strife come between us. [Exit.

TIBERIUS.

Curses blight thee!
I thought the Alpine vultures, long ere now,
Had feasted on thy carcass, and thy bones
Lay whitening in the lonely mountain winds,
Grim night wolves howling o'er them.—He has 'scaped—
By cowardice, or treachery?—'Tis no matter—
I've brought my wife from Rome's infectious air,

That sink of all licentiousness and vice,
To these wild deserts for a goodly purpose !
To place her in the reach of him she loves !
Oh, in her dreams oft have I heard her breathe
His name—the cursed slave !—with heart-heaved sighs
Of wanton tenderness.—Amid the battle,
Can I not steal upon the British dog,
And smite him through the ribs ?—No, I will wait
A fitting time and place, the insolence
Of this proud savage to chastise, and take
A sure and manly vengeance !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Sacred Grove, near the British Encampment.*

Enter Arixina Singetona and Dalthula.

ARIXINA.

DIDST thou, Dalthula, see my lovely boy
At day-break in his secret, woody bower ?

DALTHULA.

I did, most honoured lady.

ARIXINA.

Call me friend,
For I've no other friend on earth but thee :
O these ferocious strangers of the south,
Who claim the world's dominion, are again
Landed upon our shores !—Soon will be heard
The thund'ring drum, the winding horn, and yell
Of dreadful warriors, ringing through these shades !
Should those invaders of our freedom win
The blood-dyed field, and through our sacred groves
Rush in their dreadful fury, driving us
From these recesses, Oh, what will become,
Dalthula, of my poor ill fated child ?

DALTHULA.

Indeed, I tremble both for him and you ;
Nor know I how to advise.

ARIXINA.

Ah ! well thou know'st
That it is certain death to own him mine !
I who am of the vestal train the chief, (6)
And now th' high priestess of the glorious sun.
To thee alone I've told—who too art one
Of that high office—this most dreadful secret,
Which now with terror turns my blood to ice !
O where is Cymbaline ?—Were that false prince
But here, he might preserve his hapless child,
And secretly convey him hence to some
Strong hold of safety.—But he is far away !
He hath the wretched mother and her child
Both, both abandoned to despair and death !
He dwells with pomp, amid the splendid halls
Of the proud stranger, reckless of the woes
That rend my anxious heart !

DALTHULA.

Hope better, lady :
Should he the Celtic throne, his birthright, win,
By Roman aid, he may preserve you both
By his high power, and claim you for his queen.

ARIXINA.

No, my Dalthula, he remembers not
His solemn oaths, his vows of endless love.
Long years have past since I his face have seen,
Or heard from the betrayer.—Fatal hour !
When first I met him with his hounds and hawks
Amid the summer forest.—By the stone (7)
Of Cuthla's tomb the noble hunter stood :—
O, he appeared like our bright god of flame
Lighted from his sun-blazing car to sport
The hours away in chase amid our woods !

I loved, although I knew 'twas death to love !
I knew my doom, if once discovered, yet
Passion, like a wild tempest, o'er me rushed,
And I should on the burning pile have died
In ecstasies, blest with the false one's love !

DALTHULA.

Who could resist the influence of love's power
That conquers all, when he in such a form
As Cymbaline's appeared ?

ARIXINA.

I should, Dalthula ;—

I should have from his fatal presence fled,
Though he had been indeed the god of light.
I was a Vestal, and the sacred fire
Of virtue in my bosom should have blazed
In its refulgent fulness, and consumed
All earthly passion, all unholy thoughts !
Had he detained me, I should in my heart
Have plunged his sword, have yielded its best blood,
But not my spotless honour !—then might I
Have unpolluted died, as I had lived,
Devoted to pure virtue and the gods !

DALTHULA.

Yet, sacred lady—

ARIXINA.

Call me no more,
Dalthula, by that title, I command.
I am not sacred, though I minister
Before the altar-fire.—Virtue alone
Is sacred ; it is only she can claim
Respect and homage both from men and gods.
O, I have fallen from that all glorious height,
Where once I stood in purity enshrined,

Which shed a dazzling glory o'er my soul—
I yielded to the earthly flame of love—
I was betrayed, undone!—and since have known
Nothing but misery, terror, and despair!
It is not guilt alone that haunts my soul,
When I before great Milcom's altar stand, (8)
Amid the bowing train of priests and virgins;
I am a mother—and a mother's fears
For a loved child distract me!—O, how dreadful,
To think that name, which others of my sex
Proudly delight in, is to me the source
Of fearful and unutterable horrors!

DALTHULA.

O, calm those fears; your child may yet be safe.

ARIXINA.

Not if these Romans come.—O, they will rush
Amid the sacred bower where I have hid
The lovely one, since from the hollow oak,
His cradle in the forest depths, I took him.
No place, however hallowed, and untrod
By feet profane, but these war-fiends of blood
Will enter!—they will tear him from my arms!
His precious blood will smoke upon their swords,
And I—O, wretched mother, cannot, dare not save him!

(A flourish of horns.)

DALTHULA.

Those horns of war call the assembled kings
To council in the temple's inner circle.
A solemn sacrifice will there be made
To Hesus, god of war.—You must attend, (9)
And lead in solemn march the vestal train.

ARIXINA.

I see the gathering tempest of my fate

Comes hastening in its darkness, like the storm
Along the desert hills!—Roll on, ye clouds,
Ye thunders burst on my devoted head,
For I have sinned against the angry gods ;
But spare my guiltless child.—If hither come
These Roman tyrants, I will own him mine,
And if we perish, we will die together ! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Forest. In the centre a grand Druidical Temple, or double circle, like the ancient Stonehenge. On one side are three Trilithons, each composed of two pillars, or rocks, higher than the rest, with a transom stone resting on them ; under the centre Trilithon a great hearthstone on the ground, on which is a fire burning. A long avenue of rocks or pillars is seen at the upper end of the stage leading from the Temple filled on each side with British Soldiers. In the centre of the inner circle is a lofty pillar.*

Cassfelyn, Carvilius, Dunvallo, Cingetonix, and Togorma are discovered standing each by his pillar, surrounded with Officers.—Cassfelyn being by the central, or chief pillar. The Characters come forward.

CASSFELYN.

Kings of the south ! well are ye met this day,
Your battle-weapons here to join with mine,
In the proud cause of Britain's liberty.
Again these wolves of Rome, these tiger hordes,
That wage eternal war with all mankind,
Have crossed the seas, and prowl upon our shores.
By 'Tyvi's stream I learn they are encamped.
O may the dark fiend of the rotten fens

Shake from his gloomy wings all maladies,
And breathe the red plague on them, till their flesh
Drop piece-meal from their bones!—Yet would I rather
That they might live unscathed, save by our swords,
That we may have the glory and renown
Their legions of destruction from our shores
To sweep into the sea.

DUNVALLO.

Piercer of shields,
Helmet of Britain, thou art our chief king
And leader of our armies— (10)

CASSFELYN.

Yes, I've won,
Not more by conquest than the people's love,
The sovereignty supreme of this great isle.

CINGETONIX.

And long may'st thou retain it, not one doit
Of tribute yielding, or one rood or foot
Of this thy empire to the insatiate foe.

CASSFELYN.

Perish my name, like a base mountaineer's,
Torn be the crown from these balm-honoured brows,
Drag me at Cæsar's chariot wheels through Rome,
And let this kingly sword, this brazen helm
Be in her Capitol as trophies hung
To my disgrace eternal, if I yield
One inch of my loved country to a foe,
Or tribute pay for Britain, while one drop
Of British blood warms this determined heart,
Devoted to her freedom !

TOGORMA.

Gallant prince,
Thou merit'st that high power on thee conferred
By thy confiding country.

DUNVALLO.

Yes, unworthy

Was Cymbaline, thy nephew, to have rule
O'er those high spirits and their thousand tribes
Who dwell in Ynis, Prythian's warlike isle.

CASSFEYLN.

Why he, the unmanly traitor ! spent his hours
In soft voluptuous ease, and all the follies
Of love and women, wine and Roman pomp.
To emulate the luxuries of that race,
With all their curst refinements, which ennerve
The lofty mind, and sink the warrior down
Into a tame submissive shackled slave,
Was his delight—therefore I rose in arms,
And with the people cast him out a beggar,
A dunghill hound, to crouch, and supplicate
Those lordly thieves, whom he so much admires,
For leave to basely live upon the crumbs
Rome's senate flings him from their king-served board ;
And now I hear he comes in Cæsar's train,
Hoping to win these realms by Cæsar's sword,
And hold them in base vassalage to Rome.

DUNVALLO.

That cannot be—

CASSFEYLN.

Cannot ! no, by yon sun,
The worshipped god of light, it shall not be !
Britain will never bow to foreign power ;
Will never homage yield but to a king
Born of her blood—a king who shall be free,
And free his people, while one man is found
To struggle for her glory !—She will shout
Freedom in council, freedom in the field !—

And freedom still shall be the sun-bright throne
On which her kings shall reign, while through all time
Shall her own ocean's lion-sounding voice
Shout freedom round her shores! (11)

CARVILIUS.

But why, my lord,
And royal general, this unmeet delay?
It irks my soul, impatient for the fight,—
Why have we not these hated Romans met
On yonder shores, as erst we did when first
This Cæsar dared invade us?—I would fain
Have met him there with our united hosts,
And dyed the ocean deep with Roman blood! (12)

CASSFELYN.

I've other plans, Carvilius, well matured,
For this great struggle.—Cæsar shall be met—

CARVILIUS.

And who is Cæsar? what are his proud legions
That we should for a moment shun their spears?
Is he more terrible in battle-day
Than all the car-borne warriors of the south?
I and my followers fear not e'en the bravest
That ever lifted buckler.—Let us on—
Sound for the march.—Tyrants, the foes of Britain,
And her high liberty, should not be suffered
To imprint a footstep on her sacred shores!

CASSFELYN.

Check thou thy noble spirit's martial fire
But a few hours, and it shall have full vent
To blaze amid the conflict.

CARVILIUS.

O, I hate
Idly to lie encamped amid these woods—

'Tis like a tiger that in secret lurks
To spring upon his weak unguarded prey :
I'd rather, like the kingly lion, stalk
Fearless abroad, and make the desert ring
With my repeated roarings.

CASSFELYN.

Aye, and lose
Both victim and revenge.—Hear me, ye chiefs ;
I have my scouts to watch this Cæsar's movements,
And will not on one general battle stake
The safety of my country.—Soon, no doubt,
He will divide his army ; half his troops
Will seek us, and the other part remain
To guard his camp and navy.—Should he find
Us here, ere night, while I the fight sustain,
Carvilius, thou shalt haste to Tyvi's banks
With a strong host of chariots, foot and horse,
And storm their camp, and set their fleets on fire :
Such enterprise well suits thy ardent zeal.

CARVILIUS.

O, that the sun were in the green wave sunk,
And I beheld the watch-fires of the foe !—
As the loud thunders of a thousand streams,
Swelled by the winter storms, roll down the hills,
So shall the crimson tide of battle roar
Around their midnight tents !

Enter Vortimer.

VORTIMER.

Great king of kings,
Cæsar hath left his camp by Tyvi's flood,
And hitherward with twice six thousand foot,

D

And half his heavy armed cavalry,
Comes forth to seek thee.

CARVILIUS (*kneeling*).

Theme of bardic songs,
Helmet of Strength, I here beseech thee, grant,
Ere I depart with those I lead, to assail
The foeman's camp, I may the glory share
Of this day's noble strife.—I cannot bid
My banner move from off the battle-field
And see my friends, my gallant countrymen,
Fighting against th' oppressors of the world.

CASSFELYN.

It shall be so.—Carvilius, thou shalt not
Retreat till half the triumphs of the field
Are nobly won or lost.—I will reserve
Ten thousand for thy service.—How near the foe?

VORTIMER.

Full two hours' march from Calmar's woody hill.

CASSFELYN.

We'll wait them here.—Go bid th' High-priest begin
The sacrifice to Hesus, god of war. [*Exit Vortimer.*
Will Cymbaline with these vile Romans come,
And draw a traitor's sword against his country?
O that my arm may meet him in the fight!
Then if he fall by me, his blood shall rest
On his own head, and Britain will applaud
The deed that rids me of a rival foe.—(*Aside.*)

(*Music of harps, trumpets, and horns at a distance.*)

Hark! the priests

Are leading here the Roman captive slaves,
Whose blood must on great Hesus' altar flow.

*Enter down the avenue of rocks, between the ranks
of British soldiers, a train of Bards in vestments*

of white and azure, playing on their harps and trumpets; then the Arch-Druid in his robes, glittering with gold, and wearing a breast-plate of gems (13), with chains of gold round his neck, a crimson hood on his head, and his beard long and flowing.—All the soldiers fall on their knees as he passes.—The kings bend very low.—Behind the Arch-Druid comes a procession of Druids and Vates, the first, next the Arch-Druid, bearing the sacrificing knife, others carrying smoking censers, and all with branches of mistletoe.—Then Arixina Singetona, as High-priestess of the Sun, in the robes of her office, and adorned with the splendid emblems of that deity, her hair crowned with flowers; followed by Dalthula, Virgins of the Sun, and Druidesses.—Behind them are led in chains, with garlands on their heads, four Roman captives by other Druids, as to the sacrifice. Solemn music—A slow dance of the Druidess and Virgins of the Sun round the pillars of the Temple.—Arixina comes to the front of the stage opposite to the Arch-Druid.—The captives are led to the centre of the stage, and the Arch-Druid sprinkles a lustration on their heads.—All the characters, except the Arch-Druid and the High-priestess, kneel during the ceremony.

GRAND CHORUS OF BARDS.

Let the trump's sonorous breath
Pour the solemn hymn of death!
Let the harp its tuneful treasures
Fling abroad in bardic measures!

Till the magic caves profound
With the awful notes resound !
Till th' enchanted oaken tree
Waves its green leaves to heaven's wild minstrelsy.

Let the forest depths prolong
The mingled pomp of holy song—
Like Cromāla's cataract crash,
Where maddened rivers downward dash ;
Like the midnight's thunder swell,
When troops of cloud-veiled spectres yell ;
Like tempest-hymn o' th' wrathful sea
Be heard afar the bards' wild harmony.

Dews from magic herbs that bloom
Round Belenus' ancient tomb,
And those dark grey sacred stones
That guard the mighty Cadarn's bones
On the victim warriors fling,
With drops from Melcom's wizard spring ;
Crown them with wreaths of mistletoe
Which on the blood-stained central oak tree grow.

Weave the mystic dance around,
Softly beat the holy ground :
Gods and spirits from the skies
Join our awful mysteries,
Sound the last deep trumpet strain,
Burst the warrior captives' chain ;
Hark ! the gods in thunder call
Our noble victims to their airy hall.

ARCH-DRUID.

Ye sacrificers, to yon cromlech lead
The captives forth.—They are our country's foes ;

Their blood shall be the first of Rome's proud nation
We shed for liberty—and on their heads
Be laid the sins of Britain.—They will prove
To war's stern god a grateful sacrifice :
Conduct them hence.

*(The Captives are led off; the Druid, with the sacrificing
knife, and other Druids following them.)*

ARIXINA.

(Aside.) Ah, wretched men ! I pity you—
Yet Rome, 'tis said, with all her proud refinements,
Is e'en as cruel ; for her conquering chiefs,
When they in triumph to their temple march,
From thence command their captives to be slain.
(A flourish of trumpets and harps.)—(Shouts without.)

ARCH-DRUID.

'Tis done !—they bleed ! they fall !—the god of war
Receive their smoking blood ; and give to these
Defenders of their country in the battle
Victory and deathless fame !—Behold the knife,
Red with their gore !

*(The officiating Druid rushes in with the knife bloody,
kneels, and gives it to the Arch-Druid.)*

Ye chieftains of our isle,
Touch with your swords this Roman blood, and swear
That you will Britain save from these invaders,
Or die for your loved country's liberty !
(All the kings touch the bloody knife with their swords.)

CASSFELYN.

We swear to nobly conquer, or to die—

ALL.

For liberty !

*(The soldiers shout around the temple, " Liberty ! we'll
die for liberty !" —A grand flourish of trumpets, with
the tremendous roll of the British chariot-drum.)*

Enter a Druid, with a young boy in his arms, followed by two or three other Druids.

DRUID.

Great father of our order, we have found,
Gathering the wild flowers of the wood, this child.
He greatly seemed alarmed, and said, when questioned,
He from his mother's bower had run to catch
His favourite bird that from its cage had flown.
But no one knows or owns him.

ARCH-DRUID.

Then he's ours.—

A pleasing sacrifice—(*Taking the child in his arms.*)

He shall be given

This day unto the sun—'tis fit great Melcom
At such a time should also have due worship.

ARIXINA.

(*Perceiving the boy*)—Eternal gods! have mercy!—
O Dalthula,
It is, it is my son!

DALTHULA.

Ah, dearest lady,

Conceal your agonies, or you are lost!

(*Arixina advances towards the Arch-Druid tremblingly, drawing her veil so as to conceal her face from the child.*)

ARIXINA.

It is impossible!—Most sacred sire,
Let me for that sweet innocent entreat—
Do not, O, do not take *his* guiltless life:
He is no captive, nor a foe to Britain.
Plunge not yon blood-distilling blade of death
In his sweet bosom.—Thus on bended knee
I do implore thee spare him—give him up

To these extended arms ; let *me* protect
That beautiful, that innocent child from harm.

ARCH-DRUID.

What ! a high-priestess of the sun to rob
Her god of such an offering ? monstrous thought !
A sacrilege to heaven's all-radiant king !

ARIXINA.

Nay, mercy, mercy to that friendless child !
He cannot for himself thy pity crave ;
Then hear *me* for him plead—

ARCH-DRUID.

Away with him !

What means this earnestness for a strange boy
Whom no one owns ?

ARIXINA.

He weeps—a supplicating tear
Falls from his radiant eye upon this bosom.
And wilt thou, canst thou have the ruthless heart
To doom him to the sacrificer's knife,
And be the *murderer* of so sweet a child !
Ah ! (*shrieks.*) What have I said ?—O pardon, pardon
me,
Most holy sire,—my brain, my bursting brain
Burns with the flames of madness !

ARCH-DRUID.

By great Bell,

There is some fatal mystery in this !
Th' High-priestess raves !—Take her, ye virgins, hence.

ARIXINA.

No, no, I'll never leave thee while I've strength
Thus, thus to hold thee fast, till thou hast given
That infant to these arms.

ARCH-DRUID.

Give him to thee !

Wouldst thou defile the sun's most holy rites
 With earthly feelings of a mother's love ?
 Shall these pure virgins see upon the bosom
 Of their high-priestess nursed, a child, and hear
 Her call him son ?—O, infamy accursed !
 He shall this instant die !

ARIXINA.

O, take *my* life

For his—I'll be the bleeding sacrifice—
 I will not let thee go—thus to thy knees
 I cling for mercy—let me for him die—
 I'll be a willing victim to that god
 Before whose fire I minister ; so thou
 Wilt bid that infant live.

ARCH-DRUID.

Thou for him die ?—

ARIXINA.

(Unguardedly flinging back her veil.)

Aye, in this bosom plunge deep to life's core
 The blood-stained knife of death ! burn me alive
 Amid yon sparkling flames ; but spare, O spare
 This innocent child !

UTHYR.

(Shrieks at seeing Arixina.) Ah, mother ! mother !
 Save me, O save me from these dreadful men !

ALL THE CHARACTERS.

(With astonishment and terror.) Mother !

ARCH-DRUID.

Pollution ! infamy ! and horror !

ARIXINA.

No, no, I'm not his mother—No, ye chiefs,

Ye kings, ye awful ministers of heaven,
He is no son of mine !—torments and racks !
I know him not !—Distraction, hell, and darkness !

UTHYR.

O, yes you are my mother—dearest mother,
Save me, and take me, as you used to do,
With kisses to your bosom.

ARIXINA.

Ah ! believe him not !
'Tis false !—The flames of hell are blazing round me !
Guilt adds to guilt—these are the fruits of crime.
Where can I turn for mercy !—(*Aside.*)

ARCH-DRUID.

(*About to give the boy to the Sacrificer.*)

Bear him hence,
To instant death !

ARIXINA.

Off ! touch him not ! he is
A Prince's son !—Come to these arms, my child—
(*Snatching Uthyr from the Arch-Druid.*)
Alas, my boy ! thou hast declared the truth,
And I am stained with falsehood and with shame !
With guilt, deep, dreadful guilt !—I know my doom ;
Together we will die, if die he must,—
I'll perish with my son !

ARCH-DRUID.

Woman accurst !
The land will groan beneath thy fearful crime !
It hangs upon our isle like a black cloud,
Fraught with the maledictions of the gods !
Death-flames and torments only can atone
For such foul deeds !—To-morrow both shall die !

ARIXINA.

Vengeance and death I know must be my fate ;
For ye stern, ruthless priests no mercy show ;
Unalterable are your dreadful laws,
And I submit—To hide my guilt, and save
This innocent child from that fell Druid's knife,
I uttered falsehood—I have deeply sinned,
Brought infamy upon our sacred office,
And merit death !—But O, again I kneel,
Beseech, implore for mercy to this child ;
Let not the son die for the mother's crimes.

ARCH-DRUID.

Yes, both shall die !—Who is the guilty father ?
Thou call'dst that bastard brat a Prince's son—
Stand forth, ye kings—the Druids' sacred laws
Will not absolve the greatest of you here,
If any present, sacrilegious monster !
Hath dared defile a daughter of the sun !

ARIXINA.

I know not what I said—Believe me not,
I've uttered falsehoods !—'twas to save my child—
I merit not belief, for I am mad
With shame and horror ! O my child ! my child !

ARCH-DRUID.

Name him, I charge thee by the awful curse
Which hangs upon my tongue—

ARIXINA.

Never, I swear

By all that's holy !—
Heap living coals, ye priests, upon my head ;
Flay me alive, and on my quivering flesh
Pour streams of flaming oil, yet silence still
Shall dwell upon my lips, and in the grave

I'll bury deep his name !—Is 't not enough
The mother and the guiltless son must die
To satisfy your vengeance !

ARCH-DRUID.

Part them quick !

And in the secret caverns of the rocks
Let them be hidden from the sight of day,—
The sun will darken in his course to view them !

ARIXINA.

Ye shall not part us.—O, if ye are men,
Show me some little pity.—Let him stay
To soothe a mother's pangs a few short hours,
We shall then part for ever !—Be content
To take our lives—but doom me not to suffer
A thousand deaths in one ! O, he is wound
Around my bleeding heartstrings—tear him not
Till the last death-hour from me——
O, I would grapple with the hungry bear
To save him from destruction.—Savage wolves,
Let go your hold !—O, for a giant's strength !
They have him now ! the curses of despair
Fall heavy on you when you need the gods !

ARCH-DRUID.

Away with them ! I sicken at their presence.

ARIXINA.

Hurl me at once amid yon scorching flames !
Fall, ye polluted rocks, ye pillars, fall ;
Dash out my maddened brains ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

(Faints in the arms of the Druids.)

UTHYR.

O, mother ! mother !—Tear me not away
From my dear mother ! let me go with her.

(Arixina and the child are borne off separately.)

Enter Vortimer.

VORTIMER.

Prepare for battle! All the Roman horse
Are dashing through the Stour's perturbed waves.
Helmet of Britain, draw thy sword, and lead
Thy powers against great Cæsar.

CASSFELYN.

O, bright sun,
Look not this day upon the crime of her
Who watched thy holy fire. Hesus, descend,
With great Tamaris, girt in thunder-clouds,
And on our swords let your red lightnings flash
Destruction, as we strike for Britain's land!—
Dunvallo, guard the ramparts to the west.
Thine be the office (*To Cingetonix*) to protect this temple,
The sacred House o' th' Sun. (14)—I'll out and seek
This Cæsar, sword to sword.—The plumes that wave
Above this BRAZEN HELMET shall be seen
Amid the hottest strife, the signal banner
To all who would for British freedom die! [Exit.

CARVILIUS.

Out, trusty weapon! thou shalt now be made
Red to the very hilt in Roman blood!
For Britain! liberty! and glory!

[*Exeunt—Shouts and alarums, &c.*

SCENE III.—*The Outside of the Forest.*

Trumpets sounding.

*Enter Cæsar, Cymbaline, Tiberius Rufus, Valerius, and
Roman Soldiers, with Eagles, &c.*

CÆSAR.

Valerius, bid the second legion march

Against the western ramparts of the wood ;
And when the Britons issue from their barriers,
Let yon steel-harnessed knights of gallant fame
Dash on their charioteers.

VALERIUS.

I shall obey.

[*Exit Valerius.*]

CÆSAR.

Tiberius, thou, I know, wilt prove thyself
A worthy Roman.—Cymbaline, thy sword
Strikes with us—not to enslave thy native land,
But to exalt, ennoble, and refine her
From all the dross and dregs of savage life
Which she lies grovelling in, and make her meet
To be the ally of Rome.—Cæsar doth war
Not more for glory than to improve mankind.

TIBERIUS.

And yet methinks it is most sad to find
This base ungrateful world, he fights to mend,
Still thankless for his favours.

CYMBALINE.

Did I not
Believe that my loved country, when allied
T' imperial Rome, would lift her head as high
In arts and splendour as the proudest land
The sunlight visits, I would plunge this sword
In my heart's core, rather than draw it here !

TIBERIUS.

The fittest sheath on earth thy sword can find. (*Aside.*)

CYMBALINE.

I know her spirit—and the time will come,
Perhaps when Rome may only be a name,
That she shall sit upon her ocean throne,

Wrapt in the glory of her might and fame,
And be another Rome in power and greatness !

TIBERIUS.

Yes, prophet-dreamer, when the towered pomp
Of evening clouds descend upon thine isle,
Of woods and wolves, in real substantial glory,
Time may behold this rivalry of state,
'Twixt Rome and Britain.

CYMBALINE.

O, it dawns already !
And, spite of clouds and storms, still shall it shine
Increasing to full splendour ; nor, till time
And nature die, will its refulgence set !

Enter Valerius.

VALERIUS.

The foe comes thundering on.

CÆSAR.

Away ! my lords !
Advance, my eagle-bearers, on their ranks ;
Romans are ever ready for the field.
[*Exeunt—Shouts and alarums.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Field of Battle.—Another part of
the Forest.—Alarums.*

*In the back part of the scene are ramparts, or green
mounds, winding among the trees, lined with British
soldiers.—Valerius and Romans rush on and attack
them.—A general battle.—Martial music, with the
deep roll of the British chariot-drum.*

Enter Cymbaline.

CYMBALINE.

Brave Britons ! though ye war against my right,

I glory to behold your valour give
The lie to false Tiberius.—I have done
Some execution on them, but I feel,
Though rebels, a reluctance on my arm
Hang heavily when raised to strike them down.
O were they on my side, and I against
These Romans, I, by Hercules, should feel
A giant's force and vigour for the fight.

Enter Cassfelyn.

CASSFELYN.

Charge on those Roman foot, and let them feel
How British swords can strike for liberty !
Dash on, ye charioteers, amid the ranks
Of those steel-harnessed horsemen ! Let your wheels
Down steed and rider mow !
*A tremendous sound of chariots rushing on to combat
is heard behind.*

Ha ! by yon sun,
'Tis Cymbaline ! And have I found thee, rebel ?
Clad in the Roman habit too !—Base slave !
Thou traitor to thy country ! who hast brought
These wolves of rapine to our island homes,
I have thee now, and thus reward thy treason.

CYMBALINE.

Give me my throne, give me my people's love,
Of which, usurper, thou hast basely robbed me !
Thy presence rouses all my rage, and I
Will on thee, like the wounded lion, rush !

*[Exeunt Cassfelyn and Cymbaline fighting.—Enter
on the other side, Cæsar, Ventidius, and Romans.]*

CÆSAR.

Come on, my friends ; bravely our troops have shown

That Roman courage is invincible !
The second legion has the intrenchments stormed,
And now the hottest fury of the fight
Rages around their temple—let us thither.

[*Trumpets, alarums.—Exeunt.*

Enter Cassfelyn.

CASSFELYN.

The gods pour curses on those Roman slaves !
I've lost my destined victim in the rush
And swell of the fierce conflict.

Enter Togorma and Britons.

TOGORMA.

Haste, great chief,
Our stoutest ranks fall back ! The Romans enter
Within the sacred ramparts, like a flood,
Bursting its barriers ! To the temple,—on !—
There Cingetonix needs thy speedy aid !

CASSFELYN.

Illustrious warriors of bow and shield,
Remember, chains and slavery are the gifts
Of these far-roaming eagle-bannered hordes,
Who dare imprint their blood-steps on our shores !
Eternal glory shines upon the tombs
Of those who for their country bravely fall,
And songs of bards proclaim their deathless fame. (15)
Shout, Britons, to the charge ! like thunder rolling
From cliff to cliff along the midnight hills,
Waking the drowsy sun-bird.—Thus on high
The red plumes of the BRAZEN HELM I wave !
This is bright freedom's standard !—round it rally !—

A thousand battle-fields shall yet be fought
Ere Britain to these Roman robbers yield !

[*Shouts, alarums—Exeunt.*

Enter Tiberius wounded.

TIBERIUS.

These Britons on our ranks with tiger-roar
Spring like the dog of hell !—Cæsar, though thou
The day hast won, thine eagle's golden pinions
Will never sweep in glory o'er this isle
Of savage furies !—Deeply have they gashed
Through buckler and through harness—O, could I
But find this Cymbaline, while strength remains
To give him battle !—Ho ! thou king of wolves !
Thou prince of shaggy bears ! Tiberius calls !—
Come from thy lurking-place, and prove thyself
Worthy a Roman's sword !—Give me, ye Fates,
But life to win revenge, then care I not
How soon ye cut the thread of this existence.

Enter Cymbaline.

CYMBALINE.

By the bright god of day, I cannot fight
As I was wont under great Cæsar's banners
In Germany and Gaul.—I feel as if
A curse fell on me when a Briton sinks
Beneath my sword—

TIBERIUS.

I with this scarf must hide
These bleeding wounds, or his proud spirit will
Decline the combat. (*Aside.*)

CYMBALINE.

What thinks Tiberius now ?

Do these same coward Britons hide their heads
From thee and Cæsar ?

TIBERIUS.

Thanks, good king of tigers,
Monarch of hunger-maddened wolves and bears,
For the remembrance of the lie thou gav'st me.

CYMBALINE.

And I as freely give it thee again—
Lions in battle hast thou found these Britons ;
Nor is there one who, in the field, this day
Has not, by yonder sun, given thee the lie
Right bravely with his sword.

TIBERIUS.

And thus do I
Revenge the insult, villain, on thy head !
No Cæsar is there here to part us now.

CYMBALINE.

There's blood upon thee—thou hast felt already
The island lion's fang.—Go, Roman dog,
And whine thou in thy tent.—I will not stain
The honour of this sword by lifting it
Against a wounded foe.—Go, get thee gone !—
(*Turning from him.*)

TIBERIUS.

'Tis British blood ! it is thy country's blood !
The blood of yonder cowards, who are now
Flying before the Romans !—Dastard slave !—(*Crosses.*)
Thus do I stand and bar thy way to flight—
Thou fear'st to meet a Roman in the field !

CYMBALINE.

Fear ! shameless miscreant ! by the holy gods,
Wert thou great Hercules, I'd meet thee thus,
And choke thy falsehoods in thy gushing blood !—
(*They fight.*)

A grand flourish, shouts, &c. Enter Cæsar, Valerius, Ventidius, Roman officers and soldiers, eagle-bearers, &c.

CÆSAR.

Shame on you both!—What! on the plains of glory,—
Where we for empires strive,—thus meanly wage
A petty, personal feud! Put up your swords—
The vanquished Britons all have fled the field,
And left their camp to us.—Here for the night
Pitch we our tents.—Strike victory's noblest strains!
There's glory in the trumpet's martial sound,
That flings proud rapture o'er the warrior's soul,
When conquest binds her laurel round his brows;
The triumph of this day preeminates
Rome's future empire o'er this far famed isle. (16.)

Flourish.—Shouts.—The standard-bearers surround Cæsar, and other Roman officers and soldiers enter, forming a grand military picture.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Prætorium of the Roman Camp at Rutupæ.—Eagles, Altars of the Gods, Banners, &c. arranged in lines.—The General's tent in the back ground.*

Enter Cymbaline and Ewyllen at different sides.

EWYLLLEN.

WELCOME, my friend; what news bring'st thou from
Cæsar?

CYMBALINE.

Victory waits on his steps, his brows to crown
With her immortal garlands; and the foe
Where'er he moves before his genius flies,
As if a god in arms the Romans led!
The rebels, with their BRAZEN HELM, are driven
From their strong forest ramparts and their temple,
Where, with his army, Cæsar now encamps.

EWYLLLEN.

What brings thee hither at this hour, my prince,
Fresh from the battle-field?

CYMBALINE.

Ewyllen, thou
Art the loved friend and partner of my soul;
And, though thou hatest these Romans, for my sake
Still in their camp reluctantly dost linger.
I will to thee reveal what brought me here,
With harness yet unwashed from rebel blood.—
Claudia, the lovely, the enchanting Claudia,

Whom, as thou knowest, to madness I adored,
Is in this camp.

EWYLLLEN.

Here!

CYMBALINE.

Yes,—and—married!

EWYLLLEN.

Married!

CYMBALINE.

Ay, to Tiberius—false, and cruel woman!

EWYLLLEN.

Why hast thou then a wish again to see her?

CYMBALINE.

I cannot, O I cannot live, Ewyllen,
Without a farewell meeting to pour forth
The injured feelings of my tortured soul.
Cæsar's dispatches therefore did I crave
To be the bearer of to Atrius here,
His chief lieutenant.—I must seek him out.

EWYLLLEN.

Take thou my counsel.—Back to Cæsar's camp
Return this very night—See her no more.

CYMBALINE.

Not see her?—when with fierce impatience burns
For one last interview my wounded spirit?
Impossible!—O, hadst thou, gentle friend,
Met her, as I have done, at evening hour,
On Tiber's flowery banks, when the soft winds
Their perfumed music through its green reeds sighed,
And flung the moon her veil of silvery light
O'er myrtle groves and orange bowers, whose fruit
Shone like the richness of a golden mine;
When Rome's proud palaces at distance rose,

Like a bright dreamy vision, in their pomp,
 While sweet-toned lays of nightingale and flute
 Came shedding o'er the beautiful and grand
 Their shadowy-lighted spells of wild enchantment—
 O, hadst thou met her there, in such an hour,
 Thou wouldst have thought another Venus smiled
 In thy rapt arms, and heaven was all around thee!

EWYLLLEN.

Child of romantic passion—

CYMBALINE.

O, I tell thee,
 Hadst thou but met her, as I oft have done,
 Amid the golden halls of revelry,
 Where Rome's bright star-eyed beauties thronged in
 pomp,

While she outshone the fairest of that throng,
 And her dark eyes, flashing with radiant fires,
 Had on thee shed their richest, sweetest light,
 Thy heart, like mine, would with love's frenzy burn!—
 O, what bright hours of bliss I've known in thee,
 Immortal Rome, when gorgeous feast and song,
 Music, and love, and beauty round me flung
 The dazzling splendours of th' abode of Jove!

EWYLLLEN.

O thou art, in thy passion's frenzied mood,
 Wild as the wildest waves that headlong rush
 Where'er the tempest bids.

CYMBALINE.

Why 'tis in vain
 To struggle with the swell of passion's tide.
 I float upon the surge to isles of bliss,
 Heedless of rocks and storms.

EWYLLLEN.

Thou wilt be wrecked—

CYMBALINE.

Let me be wrecked but on some happy shore,
Where love and beauty dwell, and I care not
What howling tempests bear me to their arms.

EWYLLLEN.

Is this a prince, an exiled prince, who comes
To seek a throne and kingdom by his sword?
And who, to aid his cause, hath hither brought
The vaunting conquerors of the world, who boast not
More of their victories on the embattled plain,
Than of their cold, stern virtues, and the triumph
Won by them o'er their passions.—Yet hast thou,
In the first hour of glory, left the field
For a false-hearted, proud, forgetful woman!

CYMBALINE.

Oh for one smile from Claudia, I would fling
Kingdoms and sceptres to the wind as chaff.—
No—there is one, more dear than Claudia's smile—
Britain, I would not cast *thee* from my heart
For all the bliss that woman's love can yield!
Bear witness, Heaven, I came not more to win
My noble birthright in this ocean-isle,
Than to improve, enlighten, and refine
My barbarous subjects, till, by bright example,
My native land in arts and arms shall shine
The queen of islands, and the friend of Rome.

EWYLLLEN.

Rather her conquered slave.

CYMBALINE.

What means my friend?

EWYLLLEN.

He means that if this kingdom thou dost win
By Rome's proud tyrant arm, thou from that hour

Wilt be a homager, a royal slave,
And the poor image of a powerless king,
Who grasps a shadowy sceptre !

CYMBALINE.

No, Ewyllen,
I shall be an ally, not slave of Rome.
O, I would rather herd with the grim bear
In forest-caves, and struggle with the wolf
To share his midnight blood-feast, than enslave
My noble country, for the brightest crown
Rome has the power to give.

EWYLLLEN.

Ay, there it is—
Britain must be the gift of Rome if thou
Wouldst have her for thy kingdom.—But, my friend,
Think'st thou that Britons ever would remain
The quiet subjects of a prince imposed
Upon them by these robbers whom they hate ?
A prince who must to Romans tribute pay,
And ask their leave how long the sceptre he
Shall sway o'er his dominions !

CYMBALINE.

By great Hesus,
Thou plant'st a thousand daggers in my heart !—
Cæsar's proud triumph o'er my countrymen,
Though they are rebels, gives me misery, pain
Unutterable !—I feel I'd rather lose
Empire and life than to dominion climb
By treading on the neck of my loved country,
Bowed prostrate to a foe.—But now for Atrius—
Then to fair Claudia I'll devote an hour,
And charge her with her falsehood—(*going.*)

EWYLLLEN.

Ah, my prince,
Is there no hour when on your thoughts intrude]
The wrongs of Arixina?

CYMBALINE.

Yes, Ewyllen,
Amid the joys and splendid scenes of Rome,
And in the wine-stirred riot of the camp,
Her form would haunt me still.—I've deeply wronged
her!

And deeply do I still repent that hour
When boundless passion led me to the crime,
'The awful crime!—Name her to me no more!—
I would forget there e'er was such a being,
So wildly sweet, so beautiful, so kind,
So guiltless, and so injured!

EWYLLLEN.

You might now,
Protected by these Romans, yet atone
For all the wrongs you've done her.

CYMBALINE.

How, my friend?

EWYLLLEN.

Make her your queen.

CYMBALINE.

What madness hath possessed thee?
Own that I ever loved a vestal maid,
Devoted to the sun!—nay, more, betrayed,
Polluted her, who for her noble blood
And sanctity was to the God of Day
Made the High-priestess!—

EWYLLLEN.

Yet if on thy head
The British diadem—

CYMBALINE.

Dost thou not know

The dread severity of Druid laws?

That kings dare not absolve when priests condemn!

Thou only knowest beside ourselves on earth

The fatal secret—and were it revealed,

We to the horrid flames should both be given!

Or could the fear of Rome preserve my life,

I should be shunned, abhorred, cast out, accursed

By men and gods, a wretch whom all would hate!

Death from a doom so terrible were bliss!—

I dare not claim her.—No, that dreadful deed

Must in oblivion be for ever buried! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*The outside of Claudia's Pavilion.*

Enter Claudia.

CLAUDIA.

Tiberius Rufus is brought wounded back,

And now lies on his couch within the tent.

O would to heaven he in the field had fallen

By British swords, or I myself could find

The peaceful grave, and be at rest for ever!

Perhaps he yet may die—then, then the prince

Might without crime be mine, and I with him

Ascend the throne of Britain.—Rapturous thought!

But should Tiberius of his wounds be healed?—

Is there no way to rid me of that man?

Could I not, when he sleeps, steal to his couch

And—with his dagger!—Horrid, dreadful thoughts

Rush on my stormy soul!—Revenge, avaunt!

Down, down my wrongs.—I will not be a fiend!

Enter Cymbaline.

CYMBALINE.

O, my loved Claudia, what unhop'd for joy
To meet thee on the shores of Albion's isle—
Joy, did I say?—Alas, it had been bliss,
Bliss measureless, hadst thou not hither come!
The wife of this Tiberius whom I hate.

CLAUDIA

Not more than I do, prince.

CYMBALINE.

What! dost thou hate him?
Then, Claudia, art thou not more fair than false!
Ay, doubly false! false both to him and me!

CLAUDIA.

To neither, Cymbaline.—

CYMBALINE.

I hither came,
Quitting the field of honour and renown,
And, dearer still, revenge for all my wrongs,
To look once more upon thy lovely form,
To chide, upbraid, to curse thee for thy falsehood,
And then for ever from thee tear myself,
And seek in absence to forget thy charms.
But O, one look of thine, one tender glance
Fires all my soul, and I could weep and rave,
Yet still upon thy matchless beauty dote,
Forgetting all but thee!—O, cruel Claudia!

CLAUDIA.

Cruel indeed has been poor Claudia's fate!—
'Tis she who is most wrong'd.—When thou didst quit
The world's proud capital to join in Gaul
The Roman armies, I was by my sire,
And this Tiberius, to the altar dragged,

And there, despite resistance, forced to give
This hand in marriage !—O, my bridal night
To me was misery, horror, and despair !
While all my hours have since devoted been
To fruitless plaints and weeping tears for thee !

CYMBALINE.

Thy injuries fire my soul with boundless rage !

CLAUDIA.

Tiberius is returned.—In yonder tent
He wounded lies—buried perchance in sleep—
No guards are near him.—If thou wert to steal
Softly—it might be done.—

CYMBALINE.

What means my Claudia ?

CLAUDIA.

Why that—but no—thy looks forbid my thoughts
To shape themselves in words—

CYMBALINE.

Claudia, thou knowest
That I within this bosom feel for thee
Such an excess of passion as no heart
But mine e'er felt before.—

CLAUDIA.

Why then arise,
And fearlessly avenge my burning wrongs !
Avenge thine injured Claudia's shrieks and tears,
When she was by Tiberius basely dragged
To his detested bed.—O, hour of horror !—
Avenge thyself—and Claudia is thine own !

CYMBALINE.

I will, my Claudia, all thy wrongs avenge,
And, like a man, bravely avenge them too !
When this base ravisher shall from his couch

Arise again in strength, and with his sword
Meet me in gallant combat.

CLAUDIA.

Ah, my prince,
Thy spirit is too honest, bold, and noble,
To deal with these deep Romans full of guile :
Thou dost not know the subtle, dark designs
Italian vengeance takes against a foe.—
Did not three ruffians, as thou climb'st the Alps,
Rush from their secret covert to destroy thee?

CYMBALINE.

They did—but I and my brave follower laid them low.

CLAUDIA.

Then with thy dagger through his wounded side
Strike thou the murderer whose slaves they were.—
That villain, I now tell thee, was Tiberius!
If thou depart the camp when it is done,
Thou shalt be safe.—Nay, 'twill be thought he died
Of his deep wounds this day received in battle—
What means that look?—Why dost thou tremble thus?
Canst thou lack spirit to revenge thy wrongs?
Courage, when all is sure?—Nay, be a man—

CYMBALINE.

I will!—but not a monster!—not assassin!
Stealing to stab, at midnight hour, the wounded—
Though I in love am passion's wildest child,
I would not by a deed so base, so damned,
Stab my own honour for the Roman empire!
O, Claudia! Claudia!

CLAUDIA.

Hear me, Cymbaline—

O, if I lose him by this rash design,
I shall go mad, and do the deed myself—(*Aside*).

No more I'll urge thee my foul wrongs t' avenge,
Deep as they are.—But is not this Tiberius
In black intents—what are they less than deeds?—
A most detested villain, and a murderer?

CYMBALINE.

He may—but I will never be that wretch!—
No dark Italian vengeance shall be mine.
Britons, when they are wronged, loudly proclaim
Their injuries to the world, and bravely seek
Noble revenge, like men, in open day.

Enter a Slave.

SLAVE.

Madam, my lord Tiberius doth command
That you attend his couch.

CLAUDIA.

Silvius, retire. [*Exit Slave.*

O, Cymbaline, my dear-loved gallant prince,
Let not a shade of anger cloud that brow,
Nor dim the love-lit sunshine of those eyes,
For what I in my passionate madness spoke.
I am the sufferer, and content I'll be
To bear this load of misery, so I lose
Not thy esteem and pity.

CYMBALINE.

I do love

Thee still to desperation!—but would sooner
Lose thee for ever, than dishonoured live,
Though with thee immortality were mine!

CLAUDIA.

And when dost thou return to Cæsar's camp?

CYMBALINE.

When Claudia bids.

CLAUDIA.

Tarry another day—

I now must to Tiberius—he indeed
Is ill, almost to death—his wounds may prove
Mortal before another sun shall rise.

CYMBALINE.]

'Tis of no import how Tiberius dies,
Whether upon his couch, or in the field
By this good sword—so he dies honourably.—
When he is with the spirits of his sires,
Then will I Claudia to the altar lead,
And to immortal Cæsar her present
As queen of Britain.—Farewell, dearest Claudia. [*Exit.*]

CLAUDIA.

He still is mine!—I have not lost him yet—
And mine he shall be ere another sun
Set on the ocean wave—by marriage mine—
Tiberius may recover.—I'll not live
A wife dishonoured in that Roman's eye
By his too just suspicions.—No, nor trust,
For my deliverance and the British crown,
To the fearful hazard of a warrior's sword.—

(Storm at a distance.)

What must I do?—Claudia, 'tis thine own hand
Must use the bloody dagger, set thee free
From those strong chains of tyranny and marriage
Tiberius fastened on thee!—

Hark! I hear

The coming of the tempest! Ay, 'tis he,
The fiend of murder with blood-streaming locks!
He walks abroad upon the midnight storm,
Wrapt in the fire-cloud!—Passion and revenge

Are in his train.—Howl on, ye deafening winds ;
Ye thunders, drown the death-groan of my victim. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The inside of the Tent.*

Tiberius Rufus *lying wounded on a couch.*

TIBERIUS.

Where is this woman that she loiters thus,
Regardless of the sufferings I endure ?
Ah, that she-wolf now triumphs in my pains ;
Wanton with hope that I shall soon expire,
And she, with her curst paramour, enjoy
Her pleasures uncontrolled—but if I die,
I'll to my freedman Titus leave in charge
That he to her administer quick poison.

Enter Claudia, overhearing the latter part of his speech.

CLAUDIA.

Thanks, kind Tiberius—that's another spur,
An honest one, to make the blow more sure. (*Aside.*)
I wait your will, my lord,—(*advancing.*) What is your
pleasure ?

TIBERIUS.

Why am I left alone, as if I were
A ghastly corpse, laid ready for my burning ?
Where are my servants ? why are all my slaves
Sent from about my couch ? Thou tender wife !
Thy duties to thy husband are performed
With a becoming cheerfulness and care
To please and soothe him in his agonies !

Out on thee, base one!—I can read thee well ;
There is a wanton joy lurks in thine eye,
Mocking the pangs I feel, and rioting
In fond lascivious hopes.—Though from this couch
I cannot rise, yet, woman, my commands
Shall be obeyed.—

(Storm, thunder.)

Why what a coil is there
Amid the stormy heavens ! as if the gods
Were come abroad to punish some dire crime
Now on the eve of acting.—Call my slaves.

CLAUDIA.

Is there, my lord, aught I on earth can do
To give you ease or pleasure ?

TIBERIUS.

Yes, perform
What I command.—I'll be removed from hence
Into the inner tent—some opiate drugs
Shall there be given me, for I fain would sleep—
(Claudia goes to the side scene, and beckons on several slaves.)

If I, in such a night as this, *can* sleep.
Why how the ocean roars ! while the winds howl
In fearful mockery of his noisy wrath !
I fear me Cæsar's fleet will be destroyed !—
But come what may, I cannot aid him now.
Soft, lift my couch, ye slaves, and bear me hence.—
So,—gently—watch beside me till I sleep.

(Tiberius is borne off on the couch by the slaves.—The storm increases.)

CLAUDIA.

O, that these deeply-sounding winds and storms
Would rock him into sleep fast as the slumbers

Of the eternal grave ! O, Cymbaline !
It is for thee and love I dip my hands
Deep in a husband's blood !—This passion-flame
Hath made me madder than the seas and storms
That rave around me ! But he shall be mine !—
One hour of bliss with him, though bought with blood,
Would a dull age outweigh without his love !
I'll do it, though I perish for the crime !

Enter a Slave.

SLAVE.

Madam, my lord is sunk in deepest sleep.

CLAUDIA.

Let all then gently leave him, lest you break
His slumbers by your presence. [Exit Slave.]

(Storm increases.)

Now is come

The hour of my revenge !—'Tis terrible !
My courage falters.—Hark ! what shrieks are those
That come betwixt the pauses of the blast ?—
They are the drowning cries of Roman sailors !—
Come, fiends of darkness, to my bosom come,
Fill me, ye Furies, with your direst rage !
Death is around me, and on every side
Wailings, and shrieks, and terrors !—'Tis a night
Well fitted for so horrible a deed—
Nay, no remorse.—What if my arm should fail ?
Why then to my own heart I'll strike the blow,
And, if I cannot live for love and empire,
I'll die, like a brave Roman, to be free ! [Exit.]
*(The storm becomes violent, mingled with the roaring of
the sea ; and warlike cries and shouts at a distance.)*

Enter Lavinia.

LAVINIA.

Where is my Claudia? What a dreadful night!
The sea his mountain billows on the shore
Dashes in thunder, where a thousand wrecks
Lie scattered with the dying and the dead!
The savage Britons too, more dreadful still,
Have stormed the camp, and shout around our tents.
The Romans fly amazed! (*A deep groan behind.*)

All-gracious gods!

What fearful groan was that?—Woe worth the hour (17)
In which we landed on these frightful shores!

*Enter Claudia at the back part of the stage, pale, and
disordered in her attire, with a bloody dagger.*

CLAUDIA.

The deed is done!—His wounds are mortal now!
He will awake no more!—Ha! Lavinia here!
(*Claudia shrieks at seeing Lavinia, and tearing partly
off her veil, hides in it the bloody dagger.*)

LAVINIA.

O, Claudia, blood and death are every where!

CLAUDIA.

What dost *thou* know of blood, or death, or crime?

LAVINIA.

What means that deadly paleness? Why art thou
Disordered thus?—Yet O, 'tis such a night
As well may fright thee!—Hear'st thou not the roar
Of yonder ocean, and the crash of ships
Dashed on the rocks, the sailors' dying cries,
The shout of battling hosts, the yell of fear,
And the fierce thunder-mingled clash of swords?

CLAUDIA.

No—I hear nothing but a dismal groan
Stifled in blood !

LAVINIA.

O, Claudia, dearest Claudia,
Thy wits are sure bewildered ! 'tis the horrors
Of this tremendous night !

CLAUDIA.

Ay, 'tis the horrors
Of this most horrid night !—Yes, thou saidst true ;
Murder and blood, and death *are* every where !
Come, let us hence.—Did you not hear that groan ?
(*Storm, shouts, &c.*)

LAVINIA.

Ay, of the dying, by the Britons slain ;
Mingled with shouts and thunders !—

CLAUDIA.

O, that the clouds
Would pour their vollied lightnings on my head,
And turn me into ashes !

LAVINIA.

What, alas !
Can make thee rave like this ? Where is Tiberius ?

CLAUDIA.

He on his couch doth lie—so deep his slumbers,
That battle, storm, nor thunder will awake him !

LAVINIA.

Come, let us call him.

CLAUDIA.

Not for a thousand worlds !—
He could not quit his couch though all Rome's armies
Called him to be their leader !

LAVINIA.

Eternal gods ! there's blood upon thy veil !

CLAUDIA.

Blood!—madness! Where?—O, 'tis 'Tiberius' blood!
Soft!—or I, in my phrenzy, shall discover
The accursed deed!—

Why dost thou look aghast?

He started in his sleep—and his red wounds
Did bleed afresh.—I staunch'd them with my veil—
Deep in the gaping gashes did I thrust—(*shrieks.*)
Ha!—how he groaned!—and with that deadly groan
Gushed forth the crimson tide!—he half uprose
From off his bloody couch!—and then—

LAVINIA.

Merciful powers!—

CLAUDIA.

Ay, then he sunk again

To quiet slumbers.

LAVINIA.

O, thy wits are marred!—

(Shouts and alarums near.)

The furious Britons come! where shall we fly?

CLAUDIA.

O, any where from this detested place!—

I shall be calmer soon.—Off, blood-stained veil!

Away, thou damning evidence of guilt!

And in the strife and carnage of this night

Be lost for ever!—(*Aside, and flinging away the veil
with the dagger in it.*)

LAVINIA.

Haste, Claudia, haste!

CLAUDIA.

'Tis done!—'tis past!—and I—O what am I? (*Aside.*)*[Exit, led off by Lavinia.]*

SCENE IV.—*A part of the Roman Camp, near the Sea.—The Stage darkened.—A tempest, with thunder and lightning.—The Roman Fleet shattered and dashed on the rocks.—Shouts and excursions.—Roman soldiers driven across the Stage by the Britons.*

Enter Carvilius and Dunvallo.

CARVILIUS.

The gods fight on our side.—Tamaris shakes
The earth with his loud thunder-shouts on high,
And hurls his lightning arrows on our foes !
The ocean, that engirdles us, is wroth
At the invasion of his own loved isle,
And dashes their proud fleet on yon dark rocks,
With all their skilful mariners, to be
The greedy sea bird's prey.—
Flash out, ye livid flames, and light us on
To the brave work of death ! fire this curst den
Of Roman wolves, and with your bolts consume
All that escape our swords !

Enter Cassfelyn in the disguise of a common soldier, waving in his hand two Roman Eagles, followed by other Britons.

CASSFELYN.

Shout, Britons, shout !

Glory and triumph to the noble cause
Of British freedom !—See, my gallant friends,
The magic standards of these lordly thieves,
The eagle-gods, which from their bearers I,
Down-cleaving them, with shouts of victory, tore !

CARVILIUS.

O, gallant Briton, thou shalt be ennobled,
If rank and honours can ennoble one
So truly great already.

CASSFELYN.

Your pardon, chiefs,—

This is th' excursive warfare we must wage
Against these Romans who enslave the world ;
Till, starved, and harassed by our sudden onsets,
They quit our isle, or perish on its shores.

CARVILIUS.

This will our late discomfiture revenge,
And teach them nothing can subdue, but death,
True British courage.

CASSFELYN.

We have fired their tents,

And made an ample banquet for the wolves.
Sound a retreat !—Forgive me, princely chiefs,
I deem it meet we should withdraw amid
The wild confusion which i' th' foeman's camp,
Leagued with the midnight tempest, we have raised.
Atrius his scattered legions now collects,
And leads them hitherward.

CARVILIUS.

Dare not to breathe,
Soldier, a word of our retreating yet—
'Tis I who here command.—By the red shield
Of Hesus, now I look on thee again,
Thou art our chief, the king of Albion's host !
Who, in this mean disguise, hast nobly won
Those gloried trophies !

CASSFELYN.

Yes, Carvilius, I

Would not deprive thee of this post of honour,
This dangerous, gallant service for thy country,
Nor could I stay behind when such a blow
Was struck for liberty.—Gather around me,
And while I wave on high these trophy spoils,
As we retreat, lift triumph's joyous shout !
Death to the Romans ! Britain ! Liberty !

The Britons surround Cassfelyn, forming a picturesque grouping.—Shouts, grand flourish of trumpets, horns, &c.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Before Cæsar's Pavilion at Verulam.*

Enter Cæsar and Ventidius attended.

CÆSAR.

THESE Britons harass us by night and day,
Attack the parties we send out to forage,
And cut off our supplies—

VENTIDIUS.

'Tis plain they hold
Their liberty far dearer than their lives.

CÆSAR.

Yet have we, spite of their determined courage,
Forded their mighty river, reached, and ta'en
This the defenced city of their strength,
Cassfelyn's capital—and I'm resolved
My friends in Rome, Ventidius, ne'er to meet
Till I submission win of their chief states,
With power to claim a triumph for the trophies
That I from this fame-lauded isle will bear.
Conquest and martial glory are my aim ;
And my bright honour's pledged, that Britain shall
Rome's wide-spread sovereignty submit to own.

VENTIDIUS.

Some eastern states already humbly claim
To be enrolled as her allies and friends.

CÆSAR.

O, I the steps of Jove's proud Capitol

Will mount with peerless glory, and obtain
The world's dictatorship, or find in Britain
A soldier's grave, which shall to latest time
Be my eternal monument of fame!

Enter a Centurion.

CENTURION.

A dust, great Cæsar, towering to the sky,
In murky clouds, is from the ramparts seen,
Near to those fields where lately thou didst send
A legion to collect the standing corn;
And cries of battle come upon the winds
With horn and chariot-drum.

CÆSAR.

Send instantly
To aid our foragers, two legions forth:
The Britons are again, like lurking wolves,
Broke from their forest coverts. [Exit Centurion.]

Enter Valerius.

VALERIUS.

Noble chief,
Disastrous news from Atrius is arrived.
These island savages Rutupæ's camp
Assailed and entered, many valiant men
Destroying in their fury! Long it was,
Ere the Lieutenant could his frightened legions
Rally around him, and repel the foe.
Two eagles have been taken!—but there yet
Remain far sadder tidings to be told.

CÆSAR.

Out with it.—Cæsar will not shrink to hear
The worst thou hast to utter.

VALERIUS.

That same night
Thy fears were all confirmed !—Our noble fleet
The dreadful storm destroyed ! Rutupæ's shores
Are with dead carcasses and wrecks o'erspread !

CÆSAR.

This *is* disastrous news !—yet shall it not
Stir us from our fixed purpose.—We will send
Forthwith unto Libienus in Gaul,
For all the battle-galleys in his ports,
And three new legions.

VALERIUS.

I have other news,
Which bear a different aspect.—There are come
To Verulam from the Trinobantian states,
(The hereditary realms of Cymbaline,)
Ambassadors, waiting to make submission
To thee and Rome, and for their king to take
Whoever thou wilt give them.

CÆSAR.

I will meet
Them in my tent.—They for their king shall have
Young Cymbaline, their own liege sovereign lord :
He shall be reinstated in his rights
Without delay—his influence will extend,
And that attachment which he feels to Rome,
Her manners and her glory, have great weight
Among these savage nations.

Enter a Centurion.

CENTURION.

Haste, my lord—
Thousands on thousands of the British pour

From the surrounding woods, led by Cassfelyn !
Unnumbered chariots, with their sharp-edged scythes,
Along the mountains flash, like streams of fire !
Their horsemen fill the plain.—The legions call
Through all their ranks for Cæsar.

CÆSAR.

Cæsar comes,
To lead them on to conquest.—When the field
Is won, Valerius, we direct will march
Back to Rutupæ, there to await th' arrival
Of new supplies, and a strong fleet from Gaul.
After the battle, bring the ambassadors
With thee unto my tent.

VALERIUS.

I shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Valerius and Centurion.—Music—Shouts.*]

CÆSAR.

Melodious trumpet—thy war-breathing measures,
With tramp of steeds and their fierce riders' yell,
The shout of closing ranks, the brazen clamour
Of chariot-wheels, on dashing to the fray,
Wake a wild stir of rapture in my heart
Felt only by the warrior girt for battle !
Rush on before me in thy dreadful arms,
Thou lion-visaged Mars ! that I may add
This ocean-circled island to the realms
My conquering sword hath won.—Then will I seize
The sceptre of the world !—while Pompey's laurels
Shall wither in the splendour of my power.
His sun must set before my rising glory !
And his renown fade like the stars of morn,
When the bright king of day comes forth to reign !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*The Roman Camp at Rutupæ.**Enter Ewyllen.*

EWYLLLEN.

Now to the altar leads gay Cymbaline
The Roman widow.—O, I do not like
This hasty marriage.—Maids of Italy
Shall never be my choice.—I hate their pride,
Their affectation, their luxurious pomp,
And, if what I suspect be true, this night
I trust the princely Cymbaline, like me,
These Romans, with their secret deeds of blood
And open rapine, will detest, abhor,
And spurn their treacherous friendship.

Enter Arixina Singetona, her hair dishevelled and her appearance wild.

ARIXINA.

By the aid

Of kind Dalthula, from my dungeon cave
Have I escaped, and reached at length the tents
Of the proud stranger foe.—Say, gentle youth,
If thou canst tell, where the pavilion stands
Of Britain's regal prince.

EWYLLLEN.

I can—but thou

Wilt not obtain an audience at this hour.

ARIXINA.

My woes, my agonies, demand access
At any hour.—Let him be where he may,
At council, or at feast, or on his couch
In balmy slumber sunk, I must behold him.

EWYLLLEN.

Urge not thy vain request.

ARIXINA.

O lead me to him—

There is a beam of pity in thine eye—
Then pity her who o'er the desert wilds,
Through forest depths, and dark wolf-haunted glens,
Mid night and storms into a lawless camp
Of fierce invaders tremblingly hath come,
To save a son, an only child from death!—
Guide me to Cymbaline.—These chains of gold,
And precious pearls of Britain, shall be thine,
If thou conduct me to the prince's tent.

EWYLLLEN.

You cannot see him.

ARIXINA.

Cannot ! but I will !

Or make my wrongs and miseries speak so loud,
That all the camp shall hear, though round me ring
A thousand deep-mouthed instruments of war !
I'll force my entrance to his tent, though there
A thousand guards with flashing spears stand ready
To bar my passage, or on their sharp points
Dash my devoted bosom ! (*Music at a distance.*)

EWYLLLEN.

Hark ! he comes,

Those sounds proclaim his marriage rites are done ;
And now, with torch and trumpet to his tent
He leads his Roman bride.—At such an hour,
Thy luckless wail is an ill-timed intrusion.

ARIXINA.

His bride ! his Roman bride !—O dreadful words !
The horrid tidings strike my wildered brain

And wither all my frame, like lightning fires
Blasting the desert's lone and shivering tree!
O, 'tis for her that I have been abandoned!—
My last hope now is fled! and all to come,
Dark, desolate despair!—No, no, my child,
My child may yet be saved.—Sweet patience, heaven,
A little, yet a little longer grant
The use of reason, that for my loved boy
I may implore and move this cruel prince
To save him from the flames.—What sounds are these?
(*Music nearer.*)

It is the bridal hymn, which on the winds
Of midnight floats.—O, on my ears it falls
Like shrieks and wailings of dim spectre forms
Wrapt in the tempest cloud.

Sprightly music.—Enter a procession of boys with flaming torches and censers, preceding the bride.—Enter Cymbaline, leading Claudia, dressed in a flowing tunica, embroidered with purple, her head crowned with flowers, from which flows the flammeum, or long flame-coloured veil of marriage.—A train of maidens behind her with distaff and spindle, &c.—A youth, handsomely dressed, carries behind her the cumerum, or covered vase, supposed to contain her utensils.—Numerous attendants on the bride and bridegroom.

THE EPITHALAMIUM.

Thalassio! Thalassio!
Touch the cythern and the flute,
Let no sweet instrument be mute.—
Hail the hour of bridal glee,
Hour of pomp and revelry.

To the kingly bridegroom joy !
 Sprung from the immortal line of Troy !
 Strew the young bride's path with flowers,
 Lead her to love's rosy bowers.—
 Juno doth on thy nuptials smile,
 Queen of Britain's noble isle.
 Thalassio ! Thalassio ! (18)

CYMBALINE.

My Claudia, why
 That pensive cloud upon thy radiant beauty ;
 Casting its dimness o'er thy sunny smile ?—
 Blest was the hour when thou didst set thy foot
 On Albion's shore, where a bright crown awaits
 Those lovely brows ; where all thy days to come
 Shall pass in splendour, and thy nights in bliss.

CLAUDIA.

Heaven grant they may.

CYMBALINE.

They will, they must, they shall !
 Cæsar again hath from Cassfelyn's brows
 Torn fame's green laurel, and now to the camp,
 In all the trophied pomp of triumph, comes !
 On his high state the conquered warriors wait
 Of my paternal kingdom, which submits
 Already to my sway.—Be joyous, then,
 For with no bitter drops shall fate, sweet love,
 Dash our bright cup of bliss.—

*(Arixina advances towards Cymbaline, who starts
 with surprise and terror.)*

Eternal powers !—

Why comest thou here, pale, injured form of woe,
 To mar my joy, and turn my blood to ice !

ARIXINA.

Ah, Cymbaline!—I come not to upbraid,
Nor mar thy bridal joys.—I came not here
Thy pity for my sufferings to implore :
No—may'st thou long be blest with thy fair bride
When I am dust and ashes !—But, O prince,
One is there who yet lives, for whom my prayers,
My tears, to thee are offered.—'Tis my child—
The dreadful secret is at length discovered,
And my poor innocent is doom'd to feed,
With his sad mother, the devouring flames !
I have escaped—to thee I fly for mercy.—

CYMBALINE.

Away ! I know thee not.—This woman raves !
Lead on the bridal train.—Come, my sweet Claudia.

ARIXINA.

(Wildly falling at his feet, and catching his robe.)

O, yet, in pity hear me, Cymbaline.—
Dost thou not know that Arixina whom
Thou once with such devoted passion lovedst ?
Think of the days long past, when oft we met
In sweet Dunrathcol's woods.—No, no, think not
On those sad meetings ! they have brought despair,
Misery, and horror, on my wretched head !
Yet think—O think upon my death-doomed child,
For whom a mother's heart with anguish throbs.
Haste, in the might of Rome's all-conquering arms,
And save him ere the dawn-clouds blush with light,
Or he to-morrow dies !

CYMBALINE.

Take her from hence, ye slaves
But use her mildly, for her wits are crazed.

ARIXINA.

No, no, I am not mad—indeed I am not.—
O, let these tears of misery win compassion.—
Has thy once gentle soul no pity left
For a poor, desolate, heart-broken mother,
Who kneels to thee for mercy?—Let me not
Die at thy feet, but save, O, save my son!

CYMBALINE.

'Twere madness to comply.—It cannot be.—(*Aside.*)

ARIXINA.

Come, I will be thy guide to where he lies
Cold in his prison cave—no mother near
To soothe his grief and lull him into slumber.—
Haste to preserve him from the Druid fires,
And I shall perish on the burning pile,
Blessing thee as I die!

CLAUDIA.

Poor suppliant!
If thou canst rescue this devoted child,
Go, Cymbaline, I yield thee to her wishes.

CYMBALINE.

Claudia, it cannot be! Thou dost not know
The dreadful consequence! My kingdom, life,
Would all be lost, were I to save this child,—
Let her be taken hence.

ARIXINA.

I will not hence.—
Here at thy feet I'll die!—O, Cymbaline!
Thy cruelty has broke, quite broke my heart!—
I have no strength to wander back again.—
Can I return to part, for ever part
With him I love far dearer than my life,

My only joy, my last fond hope on earth !—
Yes—I will strive to see him once again ;
And O, when thou art joyous at the banquet,
Lifting the bridal wine cup to thy lips,
I shall be on the dark and lonely heath,
A wretched mother frantic with despair !
Returning back to see my child destroyed,
And then to die myself amid the flames !—
O, Cymbaline ! could I have once believed
Thou wouldst have been so cruel ?—(*Bursting into tears.*)

CYMBALINE.

By the gods,
Her sorrows make me like a woman weep.
I must retire, or be for ever lost !—(*Aside.*)

ARIXINA.

Ah ! I behold him now ! my child, my child !
I see the priest conduct him from his cave,
A victim to the sun, a victim for
His guilty mother's crimes ! My sin hath brought
Destruction on his head.—O, it is I
That am his murderer !—It maddens me !—
Ah ! now I see him on the altar laid !
I see him blackening in the horrid flames,
Writhing in agonies ! His last death screams
Ring in my ears !—Distraction ! furies ! fiends !
I'll snatch him from those hellish fires, ye priests,
Ha !—(*Shrieks.*)
There's nothing but a heap of burning bones !
They crumble into dust !—Oh, mercy !—mercy !—
(*Falls on the ground.*)

CYMBALINE.

Raise the poor, injured sufferer, my Ewyllen,
And bear her to a tent.—O, deep remorse

Visits my bleeding heart.—(*Aside.*)

My Claudia, come,
The marriage banquet waits. I fear this scene
Will shade thy beauties with a deeper gloom.
Music will raise thy spirits.

CLAUDIA.

No, I feel
A shuddering horror creep o'er all my frame !
What is her guilt to mine ?—This night—
Would it were dawn !—I sicken at the past,
And dread the future!—(*Aside.*)
(*Music strikes up—the procession moves on.*)

[*Exeunt Cymbaline and Claudia.*]

EWYLLLEN.

She revives—look up—
Ill-fated Arixina, I know all
Thy hapless story.—Let me to yon tent
Convey thee safe. Rest till to-morrow comes,
And thou, with thy sweet child, may yet be saved.
There still is hope. Lady, if I err not,
Prince Cymbaline will quit this robber's den
And be again a Briton.

ARIXINA.

No—nor rest,
Nor hope is there for me, till in the tomb
I, with the ashes of my boy, shall sleep.
I must away ere dawn, to take a fond,
A last adieu—the feelings of a mother
Will give me strength my footsteps to retrace.
I am resolved.—Yes, since I cannot save,
I'll perish with my son !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An inner tent, fitted up as a bridal chamber.—A lofty couch or bed, sumptuously ornamented with rich tapestry (19) and garlands.—Music within.—On an ivory table, near the side-scene, lies Claudia's bloody veil.*

Enter Cymbaline alone.

How harshly jars that music on my ear :—
'Tis not in union with the heavy gloom
Which Arixina's ill-timed coming flings
On the rich splendours of my bridal hour.
Should this disastrous tale be blabbed abroad,
Farewell to all my hopes !—There's a strange cloud
On Claudia's brow—a fearful something weighs
Her spirits down—and in her eye I read
A dreadful meaning—a remorse that seems
To gnaw her heart-strings !—Hence, ye horrid thoughts !
It cannot be.—Suspicion hangs upon her.—
I will not think—thought sets me on the rack !
What could Ewyllen mean by those strange words
He dropped when speaking of her husband's death ?—
If she be guilty of a crime so damned
I'll tear her from my heart, though I that hour
With grief and madness die !—

Mistrust is false !—

I deeply wrong her—'tis impossible.—(*Sits by the table.*)
The mournful tale which I to her have told
Of Arixina's love hath made her sad.—
What's this ?—(*His hand falls unconsciously on the veil.*)
It is her veil—worn on that very night
When she so strongly urged me to despatch
Her wounded husband.—On that night he died.—

Immortal gods! it is distained with blood!—

(Rises, snatches the veil from the table, and the dagger falls from it to the ground. He takes it up.)

A dagger!—madness!—racks! Eternal horrors!

'Tis to the hilt besmeared with human gore!—

This is a damning witness of her guilt!

It is her husband's blood that crimsones o'er

This instrument of murder!—O, a deep,

Cold horror comes upon my shuddering frame!—

My injured Arixina, all thy wrongs

Are now revenged on this woe-stricken heart!

The murd'ress comes.—I'll tax her with the deed.

(Hides the veil and dagger in his bosom.)

Enter Claudia.

CLAUDIA.

Why, good my lord, have you the banquet left?

The chiefs lack your society within.—

Such absence mars the cheer of our espousals.

Why look'st thou so aghast?—The dews of terror

Stand on thy brow!—O, thou art ill, sweet love.—

Why rolls thy flashing eye as if it gazed

On some horrific spectre?—Let these arms,

My lord, my bridegroom, fold thee to my heart.—

Lean on thy Claudia's bosom.—

CYMBALINE.

I would sooner

Repose me on the giant serpent's folds!

Off! come not near me!—Ah! dost thou not see

That ghastly spectre frowning by thy side,

His gaping wounds encrimsoned fresh with blood

CLAUDIA.

Where! where!—Alas! alas! he's mad!

CYMBALINE.

Woman !

Know'st thou this gory veil, this poniard blade,
Steeped in a husband's blood ? (20)

CLAUDIA.—(*Shrieking.*)

Ha ! open, earth,
Hide, hide me in thy centre from the sight !
What fiend of hell hath hither brought those proofs
Of death and blood against me ?

CYMBALINE.

Murd'ress, I see imprinted on thy brow,
In damning characters, thy hideous guilt !
Let furies from the yawning gulfs below
Howl round our marriage banquet, and hot blood
Quaff from the wine-bowl ; let the ghastly fiend
Of murder there his hell-dark wing outspread
To fright thee into madness, and around
Thy lonely couch may thy pale husband's ghost
Shriek vengeance on thy head, while his deep curses
Blast thy pernicious beauty, till thou sink'st,
Despised, abhorred, to an untimely grave !—

CLAUDIA.

Hold, Cymbaline ! for mercy I implore !
Pour not the thunder of *thy* curses on me,
For I'm already sunk beneath the ban
Of heaven and conscience to the last despair !
I do confess my crime—yes, I it was
Who plunged that dagger in his gaping wounds
As on his couch he slept !—But O, for thee
I gave that death-blow—yes, it was for thee
I dyed these hands deep in a husband's blood,
And plucked damnation on my guilty head !

No bounds for thee did my fond passion know ;
Headlong it bore me on a stormy sea
Of fierce desires, oft bright with golden gleams,
Till down I sunk in the dark tide of crime !
Yet O, forgive—and take me to thy mercy.

CYMBALINE.

O, Claudia ! What, so beautiful, and yet
So basely guilty ?—Why Aurora gave
Her radiant roses to thy lovely cheek,
And all the Graces on thy form bestowed
Divine enchantment !—Yet art thou begrimmed
With damning guilt, black as the foulest fiend !
Look on that mirror.—Thou art pictured there
Bright as another Venus ! but thy heart—
Hell in it burns with all her hideous forms !—
Perdition on Italian beauties light !

CLAUDIA.

O Cymbaline ! it was in self-defence
I struck the blow ; for, had his battle-wounds
Proved mortal, he would, with his latest breath,
Have to his freedman given command that I
Should follow him by poison !

CYMBALINE.

May the gods

Rain plagues and maledictions on thy country,—
A country with revenge and murder filled !
I now abhor the very name of Rome !
Lightnings consume her armies, earthquakes heave
Her towers from their foundations ! May she sink,
With all her palaces, to the dark centre !
And let her last dread shriek, when down she plunges,
Amid sun-darkening clouds of dust, be heard

Throughout the world, that all the nations whom
Her haughty pride enslaved, may o'er her fall
Lift the glad shout of triumph!—(*going.*)

CLAUDIA.

Stay, Cymbaline—

O do not, do not leave me here alone—
May we not yet be happy?—

CYMBALINE.

Happy! What!

With a base, gore-drenched murd'ress?—Canst *thou* dare
To hope for happiness, who hast embrued
Thy fell hand in a wounded husband's blood?
O, could I lay my head upon thy bosom
And dream of happiness? No, by yon heaven,
I'd rather with the tigress in her den
Stretch my life-wearied limbs, than rest with thee!

CLAUDIA.

Then it is done! this heart is smote in twain!
Is this my bridal night? are these the joys
For which my passionate soul so fondly sighed?
O, that the storms had hurled thee to the gulfs
Of deepest ocean, and the billows rolled
Ten thousand fathoms o'er thy lifeless form,
Ere I beheld thee in Rome's palace halls;
Then had I never been the wretch I am!

CYMBALINE.

A wretch indeed!—Go, hide thee in some den
Amid the forest, where no human eye
May e'er again look on thee—with the wolf
On his dark midnight hill, howl out thy woes
Till keen remorse consume thee!

CLAUDIA.

Trample not

A friendless creature in the dust, who kneels
 To thee for mercy.—Nay, then, since I've lost
 All hope on earth, come, maniac fury, come,—
 Drown this remorse, this horror of the past,
 In wild forgetfulness.—Let memory have
 No seat in this poor brain—

A hell-black cloud

Encircles me ; the furies from it rush,
 Their scorpion stings shoot through my withered heart !
 The camp is all in flames ! blaze on, ye lightnings,
 Till nature on her funeral pile expires !—
 Ha ! (*shrieks*) what terrific form glares on my sight ?
 It is my murdered husband !—Show me not
 Thy gaping wounds.—O, staunch those spouting veins !
 Off, off thou damned veil, thou art bedashed
 With stains of blood !—Ha ! he is there again !
 He rushes on me, wrapt in lightning fires !
 O, save me, save me from his dreadful vengeance !

(*Rushes out.*)

CYMBALINE.

Guilt, guilt, how awful, terrible thy doom !
 I sinned against the gods when I defiled
 Their vestal Druidess, and now I feel
 A punishment almost too great to bear.

Enter Ewyllen.

EWYLLLEN.

How does my prince approve of Roman wives ?
 Are they immaculate ?

CYMBALINE.

Sink them to hell !

And curst be all that bear the Roman name !
 I am, Ewyllen, weary of this life :

Woe comes on woe, and horrors clip me round.
All is confirmed ! that veil and bloody dagger—
How came they here ?

EWYLLLEN.

I placed them there, my friend.
That night when Cæsar's fleet was by the storm
Half wrecked and lost, and the brave Britons rushed
Within the rampires of the Roman camp,
I passed Tiberius' tent the hour he died,
And near it found those witnesses of guilt.—
I did suspect this Claudia of the deed,
And thought, if they before her were produced,
Her crime might be discovered.—

CYMBALINE.

Would to heaven,
I ne'er had on her fatal beauty gazed !

EWYLLLEN.

Grieve not for her.—I joy to find that thou
Feel'st once more like a Briton, and hast flung
The shackles of thy Roman bondage off.

(Shouts and war-cries.)

CYMBALINE.

What shouts are those ?

EWYLLLEN.

The Britons have again
Entered the slumbering camp, and the remains
Of Cæsar's fleet are wrapt in struggling flames. (21)
Come join the banners of thy native land,
And, laying private enmities aside,
Draw forth thy sword for British liberty.
Better to rule thy native province free
Than sit on Britain's throne a Roman slave.

CYMBALINE.

No, my Ewyllen, I no more will draw
 This battle-blade—soon shall it by my side
 Be in the dark tomb laid.—I do repent
 That e'er I joined these Romans,—but 'tis past—
 I scorn the pomp of crowns.—No more shall I
 Shine in the field amid the warrior throng,
 Nor rein my steed, nor rush in battle-car,
 Like the strong whirlwind, on the van of war.
 Where is poor injured Arixina?

EWYLLLEN.

In yon tent,

I left her to her sorrows.

CYMBALINE.

Would that I
 Could save her and her child—but 'tis too late!—

EWYLLLEN.

Come, rouse thy noble energies, my prince,
 And be again thyself—(*Shouts nearer.*)

Hark! they approach!

Out, Cymbaline, and lead them on to victory.

(*Dunvallo without.*)

Dash down their tents, and trample all their pomp,
 Their gaudy, dainty fopperies, in the dust!

Enter Dunvallo, Cingetonix, and British soldiers.

Ha! Cymbaline! and have we found thee here,
 Betrayer of thy country? Traitor, thou
 No more shalt draw thy sword on British crests—
 What! silent? How thy guilt confounds thee, prince.
 Away with him—he is our captive foe,
 And to our laws shall answer for his treason.

[*Alarums, &c. Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The outside of the Roman ramparts near the sea,—The Roman fleet appears wrapped in flames.*

Enter Carvilius, and other Britons.

CARVILIUS.

The glorious deed is done ! O, noble sight !
Now, ye proud Romans, where's your boasted fleet ?
The flames destroy those ships the tempest spared.
O that all Britain now could gaze as I do
On yonder mounting flames, where slavery lies
On her red funeral pyre ! Shout o'er her fall,
My valiant sons of steel ! Freedom is ours !—(*Shouts.*)

Enter from the ramparts, Dunvallo, Cingetonix, and Britons, with Cymbaline, Arixina, and Ewyllen, as prisoners.

DUNVALLO.

On, on, my friends—Cæsar pursues our steps !
The midnight darkness will secure our flight.
Behold our captives.—Here's a noble prize !—
Haste to yon shadowy woods.—Away ! I hear
The shout and thunder of the approaching foe.
[*Exeunt.*—*Shouts.*]

Enter Cæsar, Ventidius, Valerius, and Roman soldiers.

CÆSAR (*entering.*)

My camp again assailed ! O, grief and rage !
The remnant of my shattered galleys all
By fire destroyed !—Ha ! they, by Jove, are fled !
The bony, gaunt, and blue-dyed savages.
Pursue with speed, Valerius, but no further
Than yonder flames yield light.

[*Exeunt Valerius and soldiers.*]

VENTIDIUS.

These warlike bands,
Fierce as the onward rushing sea, impelled
By tempests, break into our slumbering camp,
Then backward roll their scattered tide of war
Into the forest depths.

CÆSAR.

Soon as arrives
A fleet from Gaul, I will embark, my friend,
For that fair country, where the voice of war
Calls us again to quell new insurrections.

VENTIDIUS.

What ! will you quit this Britain ere she yields ?
Why 'twill be said you only hither came
To show it to your soldiers, and then left
A new-discovered world t' a tameless foe.

CÆSAR.

Why Britain is subdued—she yields consent
Tribute to pay to Rome for half her realms.
Have I not hostages from many states,
Despite Cassfelyn's power?—Soon will I claim
A triumph for the conquest of this Isle,
And, as I march to th' Capitol, display
The captive slaves and spoils that I have won ;
These fierce and savage Britons, as they pass
In chains, behind my golden chariot-wheels,
Will from our wondering citizens of Rome
Win thunders of applause for my exploits.

Enter Valerius and Roman soldiers.

VALERIUS.

We the barbarians to their woods have chased,
And many stragglers from their ranks are slain.

CÆSAR.

Well have ye driven those fierce marauders hence.—
Romans, Cassfelyn with a feeble host,
Deserted by allies, around us hovers.
To-morrow I will lead our army's strength
To where he lurks 'mid Calmar's neighbouring woods,
Strike a last blow, and scatter all his hordes,
Like chaff before the rushing whirlwind driven;
Then we for Gaul embark, my gallant friends,
The conquerors of this world, to win new glory. (*Shouts.*)

Enter Claudia, distractedly.

CLAUDIA.

Ha, they have dragged him from me! he is gone,
And I no more shall see him! O, could I
Have at his feet expired, my parting sighs
Would sure have won his pity and forgiveness—
O, there is no forgiveness for a wretch
Like me in earth or heaven!

CÆSAR.

Alas! fair Claudia,
What mean these exclamations?

CLAUDIA.

I am mad!—
Mad with the horror of those crimes I've done
For love of one who flies disgusted from me!
My hands are dyed in blood! a husband's blood!
I've murdered him!—But I have deeply drunk
A draught of cold oblivion, which will soon
Calm this wild tempest of the soul, and close
These eyes in endless slumbers!

CÆSAR.

Why, if this
Be true which thou dost utter, thy foul deeds—

CLAUDIA.

Demand the vengeance of the angry gods;
I feel their wrath already round me burn!
Remorse and dark despair pour on my heart
The fiercest torments of the nether hell!
Haste, Cymbaline—the bridal banquet waits—
Come let me bind these garlands round thy brow—
And fold thee in these arms.—Now we no more
Will from each other part.—Ha! (*shrieks*) why 'tis he!
That dark, grim spectre with his gaping wounds!
Oh, how the crimson torrents o'er me gush!
I'm covered with his blood!—Avaunt, thou fiend!
Blast me not with the lightning of thine eyes—
Ye gods have mercy—Oh!—

*(Falls and dies.—All the characters group
around her.)*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A grand circle, or temple of rock pillars.*

At the upper end, on a pile, ready to be lighted, stands a gigantic image, or rude form of a man, composed of wicker-work.—On twelve stones, in the centre of the temple, are seated twelve Druids as judges; on the uppermost seat is the Arch-Druid in his robes, with his sacred breast-plate.

Cassfelyn discovered standing beside a pillar within the circle, with Carvilius, Dunvallo, Cingetonix, Togorma, and British officers.

ARCH-DRUID.

BRING forth the prisoner, let him stand before us.

(Cymbaline is brought in, guarded, and in chains.)

Now, you Cassfelyn, king of all the isle,
Arraign the captive—in this awful synod
We sit as judges, by our sacred right,
Upon all criminals. (22)

CASSFELYN.

This prisoner, who
Before your dread tribunal stands in chains,
Is one of princely birth, my nearest kinsman.
It may seem like foul malice, and a wish
In me to take his life, appearing here
As his accuser; but I from my soul
Pluck out all private feelings of revenge,
All jealousy of power, and now stand forth

My country's representative and friend,
And, in her name, charge this young prince with treason,
Treason to Britain and her liberty. (23)

CYMBALINE.

Thy accusation is not more unjust,
Than groundless.—By yon worshipped sun's pure light,
There's not a heart among you all that beats
With more devotion, and a purer love
For Britain's weal, her liberty, and fame,
Than mine has ever done,—and while, ye gods,
That fount of life wells forth one vital drop,
Its last proud wish will be for Britain's glory !

CASSFELYN.

Thy tainted actions give thy words the lie.
Didst thou not quit thy country, fly to Rome,
And plot with her proud senate to enslave
Our freedom, dearer still to British hearts,
Far dearer than their lives ?

CYMBALINE.

Who drove me there ?
Was it not thy red arm that basely seized
My birthright and my crown ? Did I not fly
To Rome for safety from thy ruthless power,
To claim redress for all my crying wrongs ?

CASSFELYN.

Too young, voluptuous, and too prone of heart
To copy Rome's pernicious pomps and follies,
The Celtic states decreed thou wert unfit
To sway the mighty sceptre of this isle
In such disastrous times, when Rome's fierce eagles
Wave their dark pinions o'er our threatened shores,
Ready on Freedom's trembling form to swoop
With talons dyed in blood !—Therefore to me

They gave th' imperial diadem of Britain.
I was the people's choice, and that's a title
Far nobler than hereditary claims,
When princes are unworthy.

CYMBALINE.

Why thou art
Th' usurper of a faction.—Thy false title
Is writ in kindred blood !

CASSFELYN.

And thine, washed out
In those deep streams which from thy country's heart
Thou, like a ruffian parricide, hast drawn
Beneath proud Cæsar's banners—

Sacred priests,
'Tis plain this rebel hath betrayed his country,
Offered to sell her for a slave to Rome,
And brought the invader on our injured shores.

CYMBALINE.

Not to enslave my country—no, by heaven,
Not to enslave her, but to lift her high
In opulence, and glory, and renown,
Worthy the noble liberty she boasts.

CASSFELYN.

Thou art this Cæsar's friend, and canst not be
The friend of liberty.—Let the dread synod
Pronounce his sentence—innocent, or guilty ?

DRUIDS.

Guilty of blackest treason !

CASSFELYN.

And his doom ?

ARCH-DRUID.

Is forthwith to be crucified amid
The sacred forest to the gods below ! (24)

But thou, Cassfelyn, still shalt have the power
His sentence to revoke.

CYMBALINE.

My doom is fixed,
Nor have I one remaining wish to live.
Life is a burthen, and I now shall be
Well pleased to shake it off.—Now will I own
That I repent me deeply having joined
These Romans, and my dying lips will breathe
The direst curses on them!

CASSFELYN.

If thou speak'st truth?—

Enter Vortimer.

VORTIMER.

Helmet of Britain, there is just arrived
Cæsar's lieutenant, Atrius, and he comes
As an ambassador to offer terms.

CASSFELYN.

Go, and admit the chief—we'll here receive him
In presence of heaven's holy ministers,
And our assembled kings. [Exit Vortimer

Enter Atrius attended.

ATRIUS.

Hail to Cassfelyn!
I bring from Cæsar offered terms of peace,
Of friendship and alliance with the Romans,
Who to the wide-extended world give law.

CASSFELYN.

Not to the world—no, not to all the world—
Britain no laws from Romans will receive.

But say on what conditions Cæsar offers
Peace to the Britons.

ATRIUS.

First that thou restore
Prince Cymbaline, thy captive, to his throne.—

CASSFELYN.

This Cymbaline, in passion's vengeful hour,
Has been a traitor of the deepest dye,
And would have sold his country to the Romans.
He is my lawful captive, and condemned,
Not by my voice, but by his country's laws,
To suffer speedy death.—Shall I release
The rebel from that fate he merits, and,
To please this Cæsar, set him on a throne?—
No, though that Bald-head's sword were at my throat! (25)
You call us rude barbarians, savage hordes,
Ferocious as wild wolves,—now mark me well—
Stand forth, prince Cymbaline—pluck off his chains—
I give thee life—I see thou dost repent—
I give thee too
Thy vassal throne and kingdom—not through fear
Of Cæsar's power—'tis my free gift of pardon.—
Atrius, when thou return'st, tell thy proud chief
That thus a savage Briton takes revenge
On those that injure him when at his mercy.

CYMBALINE.

O noble uncle!—tell him, Atrius, too,
That Cymbaline disclaims all Roman friendship,
And only wishes in the ranks to die,
Fighting for Britain's freedom.

CASSFELYN.

Stranger chief,
What other terms doth Cæsar to us send?

ATRIUS.

That thou o'er Britain Rome's dominion own ;
 To her, as vassal, annual tribute pay,
 And to our camp by me hostages send ;
 Who as securities for thy good faith
 With Cæsar shall remain,—then shalt thou be
 Admitted to the privilege and state
 Of an ally to Rome, holding thy seat
 Supreme o'er Britain's isle.

CASSFELYN.

No, perish first
 The warlike name of Britain ! perish first (26)
 This noble isle ! may she be swallowed up
 In the eternal ocean's deepest gulfs,
 Ere she a foreign power's dominion own !

ATRIUS.

Thou wilt ere long repent this high disdain
 Of Roman condescension to a foe.

CASSFELYN.

Of Roman insolence !—Never ! no, never !—
 Shall I for this my noble island realm,
 My just inheritance, descended down
 From earliest periods, through a line of kings,
 Who here with glory for long ages reigned,
 Ere thy base robber nation had a name,—
 Shall I pay tribute to a proud brigand
 Sprung from a wolf-bred race of yesterday ?
 No, while I wear this helmet, freedom's safeguard ;
 While my strong shield this lion impress bears, (27)
 While I can wield this claymore, and one man
 Follows my dragon banners, I will fight,
 And, rather than the smallest tribute yield,
 Perish for my loved country's liberty !

(The Druids all rise and shout.)

ATRIUS.

Is this thy last resolve?

CASSFELYN.

Chieftain, it is ;

So bear it to thy general.

ATRIUS.

Soon will he,

Since thou disdain'st allegiance and submission
To those who earth's wide masterdom have won,
Lead on his legions newly filled from Gaul,
And scatter all who yet remain to aid
Thy hopeless cause.—And soon shalt thou be dragged
A captive slave at Cæsar's chariot wheels,
Through Rome's loud-shouting streets.

CASSFELYN.

No, chieftain, no—

A British king will die for liberty,
But never be a slave !

ATRIUS.

What madness drives

Thee on to ruin's gulf? Destruction yawns
Beneath thy feet !

CASSFELYN.

He cannot sink in ruin
Who for his country dies !—No, if I fall
For Britain's freedom, I shall rise to glory,
Eternal glory, and the brightest fame !

ATRIUS.

And fall thou wilt.—Thou canst not hope to quell
The power of Cæsar, whose triumphant arms
Subdue all nations, and command the world.

CASSFELYN.

Boast not, thou haughty Roman.—I have met

This Cæsar on the blood-drenched plains of Gaul, (28)
As he can well remember, and bore off
The heads in triumph of his bravest chiefs
Fixed to my battle-car.—I will not vaunt
How I have met him on the insulted shores
Of this my native isle.—Those grinning skulls,
Which I, as gallant trophies, still have kept,
Speak loudly for me, that I never fear
Cæsar to meet in combat. (29)

ATRIUS.

Here, then, ends
My embassy.—Thus at thy feet I cast,
In Cæsar's name, my javelin of defiance! (30)
Farewell, Cassfelyn; I shall meet thee soon
A throneless captive in the Roman tents.
[Exit Atrius, guarded.]

CASSFELYN.

Chieftains and kings, one glorious struggle more,
And if, like men, we firmly meet the shock,
Britain shall yet be free.

ARCH-DRUID—(*advancing*).

My sovereign lord,
Our isle's defender, 'tis the fated hour
When Arixina must to yonder sun-god,
As an atonement for her crimes, be offered.—
In that gigantic image shall she perish,
She and her son, that so the powers may bless
Our isle again, and crown our arms with victory.
Attend, ye kings, with sorrow-humbled hearts,
This solemn, dread oblation to our god;
And let the warlike spirits of our sires,
Mantled in misty clouds, behold the deed
That purifies with fire our land from guilt. [Exit.

(Deep and solemn music.—Enter a procession of Bards, with harps, playing a mournful requiem.—Druidesses bearing wreaths of yew.—Then enter Arixina Singetona, led between two chief Druids, dressed in the sacred symbols of her order; other priests following with the holy fire in censers, to light the pile.—Chorus of Bards closes the procession.—Enter, on the other side, the Arch-Druid, with Uthyr, the child, led by a Druid, followed by a train of other priests.)

CHORUS OF BARDS.

Fling the solemn-chanted spell
From the harp and magic shell,
That wins the angry sun t' unshroud
His pomp, veiled in yon thunder-cloud;
To shed his wonted radiance-smile
On Ynis Prithian's guilty isle,
For she who hath his rites defiled
In flames shall perish with her child!
Spirits that in darkness dwell,
Ascend from the red gulfs of hell!
Hover, hover round yon pyre,
And fan with hideous laugh the fire!
Amid the crimson flame-streams burst,
Die, guilty pair!—die, ye accurst!

ARIXINA.

Now, then, the hour is come!—the hour that ends
My soul-o'erwhelming miseries.—Ha! my child!
My loved, my innocent child.—O, let me fold him
For the last time to this distracted bosom,

Bedew his cheek with tears, and on his lips
A dying mother's kisses fondly press.—
O, 'tis an age since I have seen my child !
How pale he looks !—Give, give him to these arms.

ARCH-DRUID.

Woman, avaunt ! Such criminals as thou,
Abhorred by earth and heaven, can have no claim
To pity or indulgence.—Thou no more
Shalt press this crime-begotten imp of sin
To thy polluted bosom—chains shall bind
You both asunder, as in yon dread form
Ye perish to appease the wrath of heaven.

ARIXINA.

Fell, unrelenting priest ! and can no words
Thy ruthless bosom move to grant me this,
This little favour to embrace my child,
Ere the devouring flames encircle me ?—
Nay, then, O mighty king, to thee I turn—
Prostrate I fall before thee.—Surely thou
Hast power the iron hearts of those stern men
To soften into pity.—O, have mercy,—
Not on the guilty,—not on *me*,—I crave
No pardon for my crimes, but to my child
Extend thy regal mercy.—Save, O save
That innocent boy from perishing with me ;
Let not the mother's guilt fall on his head,
And I shall die content.

CASSFELYN.

I dare not plead
For thee, nor for thy child, since thou hast sinned
Not against man, but the immortal gods :
Thy country is polluted by thy crimes,
Which death alone, in flames, can purge away !

ARIXINA.

And are the gods inexorably stern
To those who with repentant tears and prayers
Implore forgiveness? Will those righteous powers
The guiltless with the guilty punish?—No,
They are far more merciful than these their priests,
The ministers of blood.—Ah, Cymbaline,
Art thou here to behold the dreadful fate
Of Arixina, priestess of the sun;
Who dies, she and her child, for having dared
To indulge an earthly passion in her heart,
And yield to a betrayer's fatal wiles.

CYMBALINE.

Would I were sleeping in my father's tomb
High on Dathcalmar's mountain.—

ARIXINA.

Thou art young,
And in *thy* heart some pity seems to dwell,
For tears hang on thine eyelids.—Gentle prince,
Look on that child—his innocence would melt
The savage lion in his sternest mood
To spare and fawn upon him.—Hapless boy!
He never knew a father's tender care
Or kiss of melting fondness,—he was born
Amid the forest's solitude, in dread
Horror, and agony,—a mother's tears
Were his first welcome to this world of woe!
Yet, Oh, I loved him,—dearly, fondly loved him,
And can I now endure the dreadful thought
That he his mother's punishment must share,
And die for her transgressions?—

CYMBALINE.

No, he shall not!

I'll perish for him!—
 Hear me, ye stern-browed servants of the gods,
 Spare the high-priestess and her guiltless son,
 And I will be the victim.—I have drawn
 My sword against my native land, and now
 Would fain atone for all the wrongs I've done,—
 Avert the maledictions of the gods,
 And die to save my country!

ARCH-DRUID.

Hence! rash prince!
 The king hath pardoned thee.—No substitute
 Can on him take this wretched woman's guilt.
 Yo idol-god his fated victim claims!—
 Mercy preserve us!—See the anointed rocks
 With horror move, and shake the solid ground!
 Fall on your knees—ye kings and people, fall!—
 And hark! I hear a dreadful spirit's voice
 Deep on the solemn silence breaking forth
 From yonder living rock!

*(A pause.—Then an awful voice from one of the
 rock-idols is heard.)*

Let Arixina die!—(31) *(A pause of terror.)*

ARCH-DRUID.

Strip off those sacred symbols of the sun,
 With every splendid sign of vestal office.—

(To the Druids.)

Her ashes shall be scattered to the winds,
 And infamy rest on the wanton's name
 For ever, and for ever!—

(Voice from the rock-idol.)

Ay, for ever, and for ever!

(Slowly and solemnly.)

ARIXINA.

O dreadful ! dreadful !—

ARCH-DRUID.

On her arms

Bind fast those chains, then lead her to her doom !

ARIXINA.

Off, monsters ! I *will* take a last embrace

Of my sweet boy ere the devouring fire

Feed on his lovely form !

(Arixina *rushes wildly towards the Arch-Druid,*
and snatches the child in her arms.)

Ah, my poor child !

O, how shall I endure to see the flames,

The fierce red flames encircle thee, my boy,

And hear thy dying cries !—O, that some hand

Would plant a dagger in this heart, or madness

Come, like a rushing whirlwind, on my brain !

UTHYR.

O, mother, mother ! let me go with you.—

I do not care for death, so you are with me.

CYMBALINE.

Sweet innocent !—O, how my bosom yearns

To press him closely here.—I will confess

I am the guilty father, and we all

Will die together !—(*Aside.*)

(*As he rushes forward to speak, Arixina, suspecting*
his design, motions him to silence, and expresses
by her looks a wish to die alone.)

ARCH-DRUID.

By great Tamaris' thunder-circled throne,

I do suspect this Cymbaline to be

The guilty father.—I will yet find out

The horrid mystery.—(*Aside.*)—Woman of shame,

Thou fain wouldst save that boy.—He shall be safe—
 I pledge a Druid's sacred word his life
 By me shall be untouched, if thou pronounce
 His impious father's name.

ARIXINA.

O, horrible!—

ARCH-DRUID.

Confess—or by hell's dreadful gods shall he
 Die with thee in slow torments; with thee sink
 To the dark gulfs below, there dwell in anguish
 Unnumbered ages; and when they are past
 Your souls shall transmigrate through reptile forms,
 And animate the vilest, ugliest monsters! (32)

ARIXINA—(*shrieking*).

Ha! mercy! mercy!—O, I see there's none
 On earth for me!—Alas, my guiltless boy,
 Can I behold thee die?—and yet thy father,—
 If I preserve thee, he must share thy doom!
 O, I am torn with agony of soul,
 Yet death nor madness comes!—No flames can equal
 The racks, the pangs, the horrors I endure!—
 Though he betrayed, abandoned me to shame,
 To misery, and to death; though he refused
 When I implored him on my knees to save,
 Yet will I never, never give him up
 To thy relentless power.

ARCH-DRUID.

On to the pile

ARIXINA.

Ay, to the pile!—Come with thy mother, come,
 My martyred boy, together will we die!

CYMBALINE—(*rushing to her*).

No, I will save him!—Injured Arixina!

Thus, thus I clasp you both in these fond arms.—
My wife, my child, my still-loved Arixina !

ARIXINA.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !—(*Faints in his arms.*)

ARCH-DRUID.

Seize on the Prince, and lead them both to death !

Enter Vortimer.

VORTIMER.

Helmet of Strength, the Romans are advancing !
The hills and vallies, covered with their arms,
Seem moving masses of resplendent light !
Hark ! to the shouting foe !—his van is near.
(*Shouts at a distance.*)

Lead forth to instant battle all thy strength,
Or Britain sinks for ever !

CASSFELYN.

We are ready

At every point.—

ARCH-DRUID.

Renowned prince of nations,
This day the sacred Druidesses, all
With torches at the eternal sun-flames lit,
Will join the battle, and from rank to rank
Rushing, with wind-spread locks and war-cries loud,
Fill every soldier's bosom with fierce rage
To win the prize of freedom.

CASSFELYN.

This, my chiefs,
Is liberty's last struggle.—Now be men.—
Hurl, like the cloud-bolts of the tempest skies,
Arrow, and spear, and stone, against the foe ; (33)
Let the two-handed sword like thunder fall (34)

Upon the Roman breast-plate, and let slip
 Your wolfish war-dogs, howling for the fight ; (35)
 In strength be like the mountain elk, in courage (36)
 The proud sun-gazing eagle and the lion !
 Life nobly scorn, and win immortal glory !—
 Die all ! die bravely !—

Or, braver still, preserve your country free ! (37)

[*Shouts, alarums.—Exeunt Cassfelyn and chiefs.*

ARCH-DRUID—(*to the Druids*).

Convey those culprits to the sacred caves,
 Till this great battle's ended.

CYMBALINE—(*shaking the Druids from him*).

Off, ruthless slaves !

My Arixina is, compared to you,
 Fell murderers, spotless as the brightest spirit
 That dwells among the gods.—(*Shouts, &c.*)

Enter a British soldier wounded, his sword bloody.

SOLDIER.

Where is the king ?

The Romans have the outer ramparts scaled,
 And, like a raging fire, bear all before them.—(*Shouts.*)

CYMBALINE.

Give me thy sword.—(*Snatches the Soldier's weapon.*)

Now hence, ye blood-stained priests !

Or ye shall feel the vengeance of this arm !

(*The Druids retire.*)

ARCH-DRUID.

Thou, for this outrage, to the gods shalt soon
 Repeat in penal fires a thousand ages !

[*Exit.*

CYMBALINE.

Come, my sweet boy, my Arixina, come,
 I'll bear thee to some place of safety, then

Rush on these Romans, and, since I must die,
Die, like a soldier, in a noble cause !

ARIXINA.

No, I will follow—we will fall together.

Enter Roman Soldiers, driving a party of the Britons.

CYMBALINE.

Stand, ye base cowards, for your country stand !
Wear ye the garb and visages of Britons,
Yet fly before the foe ?—See ! to your shame,
With fire-brands for their banners waved on high,
How yonder women rush amid the foe,
And fearless urge you on to manly deeds !
Mailed in the madness of my fate, I am,
Singly, a host in arms !—I'll lead you on
Into the thickest of the foeman's ranks,
And dash down all before me !—Ye shall find
That Romans are not gods on British ground.

*[Exeunt Cymbaline and Britons, driving
off the Romans.]*

ARIXINA.

Ah, how he rushes on !—I cannot follow
With thee, my child.—On every side the Romans
Recoil and fly before his deadly brand !
He saves his country ! and his country, sure,
Will save her brave protector.—O, my child,
Thou and thy father now will both be saved,
And I,—I shall die happy.—*(Shouts and Excursions.)*

Hark ! again the fight
Gathers around us.—Let me shelter thee,
My trembling boy, behind those lofty rocks.
(Retires.—Shouts.)

Enter Cassfelyn, Dunvallo, and British soldiers, driving other Romans across the stage.

CASSFELYN.

Down with their eagles ! tread them in the dust !
And bathe their banners in Rome's noblest blood !
The fortune of the day is turned, and we
Are victors.—To whose valour do we owe
The brightest portion of this hard-won conquest ?

DUNVALLO.

To Cymbaline, my lord.—Behold where yonder
Before him, and those Britons whom he leads,
Whole squadrons backward reel, like forest oaks
When earthquakes move beneath them !

CASSFELYN.

He doth well
Atone for all the past.—On, gallant friends,
Nor cease this glorious struggle for our rights,
Our country, and our homes, till on these shores
Not one of all yon robber host remains,
Save those the hungry wolf and eagle claim.—

[*Shouts.—Exeunt.*

Enter Ewyllen.

EWYLLLEN.

What wonders doth Prince Cymbaline perform !
Atrius is taken captive ; Cæsar fled,
With foul disgrace, the field !—From yonder mount
Of sacred fire I saw their scattered lines
And sword-riven squares in broken masses flying
For safety to their ships.

Grand flourish of martial music.—Shouts, &c.—Enter Cassfelyn, Carvilius, Dunvallo, Cingetonix, Togorma, and part of the British army, in triumph.—Atrius, and other Roman officers, led captives.—The Arch-Druid, with his train of Druids and Bards, at the top of the stage, so as to fill up the back ground.—Enter Arixina and the child, near the front.

ARIXINA.

Where is my Cymbaline?—Let me behold him
Once more and give my boy to his protection ;
Then shall I die in peace.

Shouts.—Enter a train of Druidesses, with dishevelled hair and blazing torches.—Then Cymbaline rushes on with his sword bloody, and himself wounded, followed by Britons.

CYMBALINE.

My country's saved !—
Cæsar embarks, and Britain now is free ! (38)
Let Albion lift from shore to shore the shout
Of liberty ! of glorious liberty !
Till Rome's proud towers shall tremble at the sound !
Let your glad shouts, my noble Britons, mingle
With my last breath.—Spare injured Arixina,—
Spare that sweet boy.—I for my country die !
O, glory ! triumph ! bliss !—O, Arixina !
Victory ! victory ! victory !
(*Staggers towards Arixina, falls, and dies at her feet.*)

ARIXINA.—(*Shrieking.*)

Ha ! the last chord of life is rent asunder !
My child, Cassfelyn, O, protect my child !—

The gods bless thee my loved one!—Take this last
Sad kiss from thy departing mother's lips,—
Farewell, my child, for ever !

(Falls, and dies on the body of Cymbaline.

*Cassfelyn tenderly takes the boy in his arms, and
all the characters form a grand picture around
him, to the deep and solemn music of the harps
and trumpets of the Bards.*

CHORUS OF BARDS.

DIRGE.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Mightiest of the mighty thou !
Regal pearl-wreaths decked thy brow ;
On thy shield the lion shone,
Glowing like the setting sun !
And thy leopard-helmet's frown,
In the day of thy renown,
O'er thy foemen terror spread,
Grimly flashing on thy head.
Master of the fiery steed,
And the chariot in its speed,—
As its scythe-wedged wheels of blood
Through the battle's crimson flood,
Onward rushing, put to flight
E'en the stoutest men of might,—
Age to age shall tell thy fame ;
Thine shall be a deathless name !
Bards shall raise the song for thee
In the halls of Chivalry.

GRAND CHORUS.

His shall be a noble pyre !
Robes of gold shall feed the fire ;
Amber, gums, and richest pearl
On his bed of glory hurl :
Trophies of his conquering might,
Skulls of foes, and banners bright,
Shields, and splendid armour, won
When the combat-day was done,
On his blazing death-pile heap,
Where the brave in glory sleep ! *
And the Romans' vaunted pride,
Their eagle-god, in blood-streams dyed,
Which, amid the battle's roar,
From their king of ships he tore ;
Hurl it, hurl it in the flame,
And o'er it raise the loud acclaim !
Let the captive and the steed
On his death-pile nobly bleed ;
Let his hawks and war-dogs share
His glory, as they claimed his care.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Silent is his hall of shields
In Rath-col's dim and woody fields,
Night-winds round his lone hearth sing
The fall of Prythian's warlike king !—
Now his home of happy rest
Is in the bright isles of the west ;

* Vide Cæsar.

There, in stately halls of gold,
He, with the mighty chiefs of old,
Quaffs the horn of hydromel
To the harp's melodious swell ;
And on hills of living green,
With airy bow of lightning sheen,
Hunts the shadowy deer-herd fleet
In their dim-embowered retreat.
He is free to roam at will
O'er sea and sky, o'er heath and hill.
When our fathers' spirits rush
On the blast and crimson gush
Of the cloud-fire, through the storms,
Like the meteor's brilliant forms,
He shall come to the heroes' shout
In the battle's gory rout ;
He shall stand by the stone of death,
When the captive yields his breath ;
And in halls of revelry
His dim spirit oft shall be.

GRAND CHORUS.

Shout, and fill the hirlass horn,
Round the dirge-feast quaff till morn ;
Songs and joy sound o'er the heath,
For he died the warrior's death !
Garlands fling upon the fire,
His shall be a noble pyre !
And his tomb befit a king,
Encircled with a regal ring
Which shall to latest time declare,
That a princely chief lies there,

Who died to set his country free,
Who fell for British liberty ;
His renown the harp shall sing
To mail-clad chief and battle-king,
And fire the mighty warrior's soul
Long as eternal ages roll !

END OF ARIXINA.

NOTES.

(1) *The paragon of men.* . . p. 6.

‘THE Britons were taller than the Gauls, but not so strong. The young Britons, whom Strabo saw at Rome, were higher by half a foot than the tallest man there.

‘The Silures are mentioned with ruddy cheeks and curled hair.’—*Anglo Saxons*, vol. i.

‘The ancient Britons were a tall finely-proportioned race, and the women fair, and of exceeding good features. Plutarch says, the strength of nature wrought long in the Britons, for they sometimes lived to the age of one hundred and twenty years.’—*Speed*, book v.

‘Nature seems to have been no less liberal to the Celtic nations, and in particular to the Gauls and Britons, in the natural powers and faculties of their minds, than in the formation of their bodies. The Gauls are represented by all the ancient authors who speak of them, as an acute and ingenious people, very capable of acquiring any art or science to which they applied. But the Britons were declared by one who was well acquainted with both nations to be still more acute than the Gauls; and to have had a happier genius for the acquisition of the sciences. And truly the imaginations of a people who delighted so much in poetry as the ancient Britons, and who courted the Muses with so much ardour, and (if we may judge from their few remains) with so much success, must have been *very warm and lively*.’—*Henry’s England*, p. 440.

(2) *And fearlessly the death of heroes die!* . . p. 11.

‘The boldness and intrepidity of the ancient Gauls and Britons were so great, that they despised even death itself in its most frightful forms.’—*Henry’s England*.

(3) *The eloquence of gods.* . . p. 20.

Cineas, sent by Pyrrhus as an ambassador to the Romans, declared that the senate appeared a reverend assembly of demigods.

‘Majestate etiam quam vultus gravitasque oris præ se ferebat simillimos Diis.’—*Livy*.

(4) *Will fall by the Druids' knives.* . . p. 22.

'One of the maxims of the Druids, according to an ancient Burgundian author, is—Prisoners of war are to be slain on the altars, or burnt alive, enclosed in wicker, in honour of the gods.

'Tacitus, speaking of the Britons in Anglesey, says, that they stained their altars with the blood of their captives; and consulted their gods by the fibres of men.

'But besides the sacrifice of beasts, which was common to the Druids, they had a custom, which in point of cruelty and detestation surpasses all that we have hitherto surveyed. This consisted in the offering of human victims at the polluted shrines of their imaginary gods. At these altars, their enemies were sacrificed, and their friends offered. Sometimes the vigorous youth and comely virgin were immolated on these sanguinary altars, and sometimes the smiling infant was carried from the bosom of its mother to the flames, which terminated its life.

'While they were performing these horrid rites, the drums and trumpets sounded without intermission, that the cries of the miserable victims might not be heard, or distinguished by their friends; it being accounted very ominous if the lamentations of either children or parents were distinctly heard while the victim was burning.'—*Drew's History of Cornwall*.

'And for that cause, such as are grievously diseased, or continually exposed to the dangers of war, do either sacrifice men for an oblation, or vow the oblation of themselves, using the ministry of the Druids in such sacrifices, being persuaded that the immortal deity cannot be pleased but by giving the life of one man for the life of another; and for that purpose they have public sacrifices appointed.'—*Cæs. Com.* lib. vi. ch. ix.

That the Druid rites were in many points similar to those of the Canaanites, we learn from the following words:—'Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks.'—*Isa.* lvii. 5.

'And they have built the *high places* of Tophet—to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire.'—*Jer.* vii. 21.

We agree with King, that the South Sea islanders were, when visited by Cook, similar, in some of their religious customs, to the ancient Britons—

'We were greatly shocked with the behaviour of Toogahowe, who two days ago had caused a young man (his own younger brother) to be strangled that his father might recover.'—*Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific Ocean*.

'And the king of Moab offered up his son on the wall of the city.'—*2 Kings* iii. 27.

Examples of human sacrifices were very common in most barbarous nations, and even practised in Greece and Rome. Aristomenes the Messenian sacrificed three hundred men, among whom was Theopompus, one of the kings of Sparta, to Jupiter of Ithome.

Themistocles, in order to procure the assistance of the gods against the Persians, sacrificed some captives of that nation. Bacchus had an altar in Arcadia, upon which young damsels were beaten to death with rods. Such sacrifices were frequently offered to the manes and infernal gods. Hence Achilles slew twelve Trojan captives at the funeral of Patroclus.

Æneas is another example of the same practice :

Four sons of Sulmo, four whom Ufens bred,
He took in fight, and living victims led,
To please the ghost of Pallas, and expire
In sacrifice before his funeral fire.

On the 13th of May, thirty old men were anciently thrown from the Sublician bridge into the Tiber, to the lemures, the hobgoblins, or spectres of the dark, supposed to be the souls of deceased friends. It was not till the year 657, that the decree *ne homo immolaretur* was made by the senate of Rome.

(5) *Of their strong helms against thee.* . . p. 23.

‘In battle, the Kimbri appeared with helmets representing fierce beasts gaping, or some strange figures ; and added a high floating crest, to make them look taller.’—*Anglo Saxons*.

Diodorus expressly tells us, lib. v. p. 353,—‘The Gauls wore brazen helmets, having either horns affixed to them, or so contrived as to represent the faces of birds or beasts. And we may therefore, from the close similarity of the customs of the two nations, conclude very fairly that such were in use amongst the Britons.’—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

‘VITZIPUTZLI, the chief deity of the Mexicans, had on his head a helmet of feathers of different colours, made in the shape of a bird, the bill and tuft whereof were of burnished gold.’—*History of the Conquest of Mexico*.

When Marius fought the last battle with the Cimbri it is said, ‘their cavalry, consisting of fifteen thousand men, were magnificently mounted ; each soldier bore upon his helmet the head of some savage beast, with its mouth gaping wide.’ This must mean that their helmets were formed in the shape of the heads of fierce beasts.

(6) *I who am of the vestal train the chief.* . . p. 26.

‘Pomponius Mela informs us of a female order of religious, amongst the Gauls, dedicated to one of their deities, *who made vows of perpetual celibacy*; these votaries, or Druid priestesses, were called *Senæ*. Camden thinks it was originally written *Lenæ*, which word, he says, is old British for a nun, as he found it in some ancient glossary.

‘In the times of Druidism, we find in Ireland females devoted to **CELIBACY**. There was in Tara a royal foundation of this kind, wherein none were admitted but virgins of the noblest blood. It was called Cluain-Fear, or the place of retirement until death. The duty of these virgins was to keep up constantly the fires of Bel, or the Sun, and of Samhain, or the moon, which customs they borrowed from their Phœnician ancestors. During the contests between Cormoc and Feargus, Dunling, the son of Endeus, with a number of wretches equally abandoned, broke into this retreat, where were thirty professed vestals; and not being able to violate them, basely put them all to the sword. This sacrilege of the Lagenian prince gave great scandal to the kingdom, which Cormoc severely punished, by putting him to the sword, with twelve of his principal associates.’—*History of Ireland*, vol. ii.

‘Druidesses.—These were females who assisted in the offices, and shared in the honours and emoluments of the Druidical priesthood. When Suetonius invaded the island of Anglesea, his soldiers were somewhat daunted by the appearance of a great number of these consecrated females, who ran to and fro among the ranks of the British army like enraged furies, with their hair dishevelled, and flaming torches in their hands, imprecating the wrath of heaven on the invaders of their country. The Druidesses of Gaul and Britain are said to have been divided into three ranks or classes. Those of the first class had vowed **PERPETUAL VIRGINITY**, and lived together in *sisterhoods*, being much sequestered from the world. They were great pretenders to divination, *prophecy* and *miracles*, and they were held in high estimation by the people, who consulted them on all important occasions, as infallible oracles, and gave them the honourable appellation of *Senæ*.

‘Mela, who has described one of these **DRUIDICAL NUNNERIES**, says that it was situated on an island in the British sea, and contained nine of these venerable vestals, who pretended to raise storms and tempests by their incantations; to cure the most inveterate diseases, to transform themselves into all kinds of animals, and to predict future events, which however they discovered to none but those who came into their island, for the avowed purpose

of consulting their oracle, none of whom we may imagine would come empty-handed.

'The second class consisted of certain female devotees, who were indeed married, but spent the greatest part of their time in the company of Druids, and in the offices of religion, and conversed only *occasionally with their husbands*. The third class was the lowest of all, and was composed of such as performed the most servile offices about the temples, the sacrifices, and the persons of the Druids.'

(7) *When I first met him with his hounds and hawks
Amid the summer forest. . . p. 26.*

'It is a certain fact, that in Britain, the Romans viewed the falconer with admiration, immediately imitated his art, pursued the diversion with ardour, and greatly improved it by the introduction of spaniels into this island.

'Falconry, then, as an European sport, seems to have been almost circumscribed within the limits of Britain; and it was universal among the British chiefs. Every chieftain among the ancient Britons maintained a considerable number of birds for the sport. In a remarkable passage in Ossian, peace is endeavoured to be gained by the proffer of "an hundred managed steeds, a hundred foreign captives, and a hundred hawks with fluttering wings, that fly across the sky."

'Here then we have gained our highest point, where falconry seems to exist in this island, unknown to the countries around, or, if casually observed, marked only with astonishment.

'A question then arises, was falconry invented (as Druidism is idly reported to have been) in Britain? was it indigenous, springing up spontaneously in British soil? or was it an exotic, imported into this island from some distant country?

'As we discover it no where else in Europe at this period of high antiquity (except a straggling plant in the country above Amphipolis), let us stretch our views to Asia. Here we find it luxuriantly flourishing. To the Indians, the Arabians, the Persians, and all the people of the east, falconry seems to have been familiar from the highest antiquity. In the fables of Pilpay (an Indian Brahmin), and other oriental writings, hawking is often described.'
—*Historical Outlines of Falconry.*

(8) *When I before great Milcom's altar stand. . . p. 28.*

That Milcom, Melcom, Molec, or Moloc and the Sun, or Baal, Bell, Bealan, Belus, Belenus, Belatucadro, signified one

and the same deity is quite clear, from ancient authorities. Altars have been dug up in Britain dedicated to Belatucadro, and that he was also worshipped in this island under the name of Melcom is equally evident, his name being to this day attached to certain places, where no doubt his altars were erected. 'Thus,' says Faber, in his *Dissertations on the Mysteries of the Cabiri*, 'MELCOMB Regis in our own island is partly Punic, and partly Latin, the latter word being explanatory of the former. Thus also, Aberford is compounded of a Welch and an English word; both of which signify a passage over a river. There are two places or villages, called to this day the two Melcoms, in Dorsetshire.'

'Molock, called Molech and Milcom. He was the reputed god not only of the Ammonites, but of the Moabites also, (Lorin in Act. 7. ex Œcumen.) He had his name from מלך Malac, signifying to rule or reign. The seventy elders translate him *αρχων, βασιλευς*, prince, or king. Such king-idols were Adram Melech, and Anam Melech, the gods of Shepharvaim, unto whom that people *burnt their children in the fire*.'

(9) *To Hesus, god of war.* . . p. 28.

'One God supreme the universe does sway.'

The Druids' system of general relative duties.

'The Druids worshipped one supreme god, immense and infinite; but would not confine their adoration to a temple, because they deemed it inconsistent with those attributes. Yet they admitted an inferior class of deities, and paid divine honours to Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, and Mercury, under the denomination of Taranus (Tamarus), *Hesus*, Belenus, and Teutates. To these some authors have added Minerva and Diana, under the name of Andraste, and Hercules, who was known to the Britons under the name of Ogonus, the god of eloquence.'—*Smollett*.

We would ask was not Teutates, Theu, Taut, the Dhiu Tão, God the father, the supreme and infinite?

The author of a 'Sketch of the Early History of the Cymry,' hinks that Tyd, (*ain* being merely a termination of proper names,) the instructor of the Britons, was the same with Theuth, or Theutates, and the Egyptian Thoth.

It is very probable, says the same author, that it was Hu the mighty, who afterwards was worshipped by the Celtic, or Cimbric nations, under the names of Heus, or Hesus; and this opinion seems to be supported by an ancient piece of sculpture, on which Hesus is represented as cutting trees, a representation which denotes either clearing the ground, or pruning, either of which is suitable to the character.

- (10) ——— *thou art our chief king,
And leader of our armies. . . p. 30.*

‘The British kingdoms, we have reason to believe, were in possession of a system of laws of considerable extent, before they were subdued by the Romans. Some of these kingdoms had subsisted several ages before that period. Almost a whole century had elapsed between the first invasion of Britain under Julius Cæsar, and the second under Claudius, and yet we find no material difference in the political state of Britain in these two periods. In both it was divided into several little monarchies; each of which was governed by its own king; and it had no doubt been in this state long before the first of these invasions.’—*Henry’s England.*

‘Though little remains that can give a just idea of the internal policy, by which the island was governed in those times, it is still possible to perceive one general principle which prevailed in it to the time of Vortigern; and in Ireland to the time of Elizabeth; which is, that though the island was in the three original divisions, and afterwards in the several sub-divisions, governed by kings or princes of each division, or sub-division, some one of them held a sovereign power over the whole island.’—*Sketch of the Early History of the Cymry.*

‘The supreme sovereign was, according to the original institution, to be always of the Cambrian race, by whom the sovereignty was claimed as their right. Some exceptions, commemorated in the Triads, are a confirmation of the general rule. The sovereignty consisted in the power of confirming, if not of making laws that should be of force throughout the island; of levying the whole power of the kingdom in case of invasion, and punishing the *Reguli* for any infraction of the general laws, by ravaging their territories to compensate the injury.

‘In cases of minority, the sovereignty devolved to the next of kin, of age and abilities to assume it.

‘Such was the sovereign power possessed by Cassibelan, when the island was invaded by the Romans.’—*Ibid.*

- (11) *Shout freedom round her shores! . . p. 32.*

The ancient Britons were no less remarkable than the other Celtic nations for their love of liberty and abhorrence of slavery, and for the bravery which they exerted in preserving the one, and defending themselves from the other. They submitted with pleasure to the government of their own princes, which was mild and legal, but they were *struck with horror at the thought of being reduced to servitude.*

The character which Tacitus gives of them is very honourable. 'The Britons are a people who pay their taxes, and obey the laws with pleasure, provided no arbitrary illegal demands are made upon them; but these they cannot bear without the greatest impatience; for they are only reduced to the state of subjects, not of slaves.'—*Henry's England*.

(12) *And dyed the ocean deep with Roman blood!* . . p. 32.

'We see upon the highest eminence that overlooks Wilton, and the fertile valley at the union of the *Nader* and *Willy*, the famous king-barrow. This, questionless, is a *Celtic tumulus*, and the very name, inherent through long revolutions of time, indicates it to be the grave of a king of this country of the *Belgæ*, and that *Wilton* was his royal residence.

'If we reflect a little upon the matter, it appears a supposition far from improbability, that this is the very monument of *Carvilius* mentioned by Cæsar, who joining with the other kings along the country on the sea-side from hence to *Kent*, attacked his sea-camp on the *Rutupian* shore, and this was to make a diversion to the great Roman general, pressing hard upon *Cassibelan*. For as the late learned Mr. Baxter observes in his *Glossary*, where should *Carvilius* live, but among the *Carvilli*? as *Segonax*, one of his confederates, among the *Segontiaci*; that is, *Segontium*, or *Caer-segont*, as the *Britons* call it, which is now *Silchester*.

'Where then should *Carvilius* live but at *Carvilius*, now *Wilton*, or where be buried but in the most conspicuous place near his palace? and no other barrow competitor to leave any doubt or scruple.

'We took notice, when, with particular pleasure we visited his *tumulus*, and paid our respects to the illustrious *manes* of the royal defunct, that among other views of great distance, we could see a long barrow beyond *Stonehenge*, and all the long ridge of *Martinsal-hill*, *St. Ann's-hill*, and *Runway-hill*, beyond that, upon which goes the great *Wansdike*, which I take to be the northern boundary of the *Belgic* kingdom. I question not, but one purpose of his interment was to be in sight of the holy work, or temple of *Stonehenge*. Here then, we may conclude, rest the ashes of *Carvilius*, made immortal by Cæsar, for bravely defending his country.'—*Stukeley's Iter. Curio., Iter. vi.*

(13) *And wearing a breast-plate of gems.* . . p. 35.

The breast-plate of Aaron was not peculiar to the worship of the Hebrews.

The Urim and Thummim.—There was a remarkable imitation of this sacred ornament among the Egyptians; for we learn from Diodorus, (lib. i. p. 68. Ed. Rhod.) and from Ælian, (Var. Hist. l. xiv. c. xxxiv.) ‘that their chief priest, who was also their *SUPREME JUDGE in civil matters*, wore about his neck, by a golden chain, an ornament of precious stones, called *TRUTH*, and that a cause was not opened till the supreme judge had put on this ornament. This was the president of the first tribunal of the Egyptian nation. Their number was thirty from the principal cities. When the court passed sentence, the president turned the brilliant image of truth towards the party in whose favour the trial was decided, without speaking a word.’

The learned Spencer (De Legib. Hebr. l. iii.) positively asserts, that the Jewish tabernacle, and all its furniture, was an imitation of the portable temples of the heathens, and of the custom of carrying their gods along with them, in their migrations from one country to another. If he be right, is it not far more probable, that the Hebrews borrowed their sacred breast-plate from the Egyptians, than that the latter imitated the former in this instrument of priesthood?

It is also highly probable, when we consider the traffic which the Egyptians and Phœnicians (see Mr. Essex, on the Antiquity of Brick and Stone Buildings in England, *Archæologia*, vol. iv.) carried on with the Britons, whose temples, gods, and forms of worship were so similar to those of the eastern nations, that their high-priest also had his breast-plate of precious stones, which he wore on all solemn occasions. We are the more confirmed in this by the following:—

Keating says, ‘The famous Moran (Mac Mavin) was one of the chief judges of this kingdom (Ireland). When he sat upon the bench to administer justice, he put his miraculous *JODHAN MORAN* about his neck, which had that wonderful power, that if the judge pronounced an unjust decree, the breast-plate would instantly contract itself, and encompass the neck so close, that it would be impossible to breathe; but if he delivered a just sentence, it would open itself and hang loose upon his shoulders.’

‘The Rabbi in the Talmud say, that the Messiah shall be called Joden Muren, for he shall be the judge, as in Isaiah 11. Thus it is very plain, that the Irish name is derived from the Chaldee Choshen Hemeshpot, or Joden Moren.’—*Jos. Heideck Prof. Ling. Oriental.*

‘With regard to the Druids, we may infer from Strabo’s account of those in Gaul, whom the British so nearly resembled, that this order of men were even richly clad; and that some of them even

wore golden chains, or collars about their necks, and had their garments dyed with various colours, and adorned with gold.—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

‘Quod ut cum iis quadrat, quæ de eorum aureis ornamentis, tinctis vestibibus, armillis, rasis Britannorum genis et mento, atque id genus aliis à Cæsare et Strabone recensentur viderint quorum interest.’—*Selden*.

(14) *The sacred House o’ th’ Sun*. . . p. 44.

‘All the ancient altars found in Ireland, and now distinguished by the name of *Cromlechs*, or *sloping stones*, were originally called Botal Bethel, or the House of God, and they seem to be of the same kind as those mentioned in the Bible.’—*Vide Col. Vallancey*.

‘And he shall break in pieces the images of the House of the Sun which is in the land of Egypt.’—*Dr. Blaney’s Translation of Jeremiah*, xlviii. 13.

(15) *And songs of bards proclaim their deathless fame*. . . p. 48.

A Dr. Jones has published what he is pleased to call a History of Wales, in which he ignorantly asserts, that the British bards were mere ‘crackers of pitchers and blowers of rams’ horns;’ but having good authorities to the contrary, we do not choose to put any faith in the silly disparagements which he attempts to throw on the ancient poets of his nation. ‘The bards celebrated the noble actions of illustrious persons in heroic poems to the sweet sounds of the lyre.’—*Ammianus Marcell.*, lib. xv. c. ix. ‘The British bards are *excellent* and *melodious* poets, and sing their poems, in which they praise some, and satirize others, to the music of an instrument resembling a lyre.’—*Diod. Sic.* lib. v. c. xxxi.

This last mentioned author also says, ‘Sometimes, when two armies are standing in order of battle, with their swords drawn, and their lances extended, on the point of engaging in a furious conflict, these bards have stepped in between them, and by their *sweet* and *enchancing songs* calmed the rage of the warriors, and prevented the shedding of blood. Thus even among barbarians rage gave way to wisdom, and Mars submitted to the Muses.’

The poems of Ossian, however altered by Macpherson, to please the ear of modern taste, are a sufficient testimony to the merits of Celtic poetry, as well as the uses and purposes to which it was devoted by the bards.

‘The bards,’ says Dr. Henry, ‘constituted one of the most respected orders of men in the British states, and many of the

greatest kings, heroes, and nobles, esteemed it an honour to be enrolled in their order. Their persons were held sacred and inviolable, and the most bloody and cruel tyrants dared not offer them any injury.'

(16) *Rome's future empire o'er this far famed isle. . . p. 51.*

It is asserted by some writers, that the Romans did not know whether Britain was an island or a continent, till about the year 85, when Agricola had the chief command of the Roman legions in this country.

'In the mean time, a cohort of Usipians, raised in Germany, and sent into Britain, having slain a centurion and other soldiers, that were appointed to exercise them in arms, took to sea in three pinaces, and having killed some of the mariners whom they suspected, the rest they constrained to do their office.

'Thus having escaped, and none knowing what was become of them, having no pilot, they were carried at random, as the tide and wind drove them, to and fro the island, using piracy where they landed. But at length, as they were reduced to extremity, they drew lots to eat one another, and through wonderful difficulties, having been driven round the north of the island, they were taken first by the Suevians, and afterwards by the Frisians, and then sold into Britain, where they were discovered.

'These were the first which discovered to the Romans that Britain was an island.'—*Britannia Antiqua Illustrata*.

But surely Cymbaline must have known that his native country was an island; and if he knew it he most undoubtedly made Cæsar acquainted with it, and therefore I do not conceive it improper that Cæsar should call Britain an island.

It is said, that Agricola, after subduing the Caledonians, 'sent a fleet to scour the coast,' and thus first discovered Great Britain to be an island.

But we need go no further than Cæsar's own words in his Commentaries to prove his knowledge of the insular situation and form of Britain.

'Insula naturâ triquetra, cujus unum latus est contra Galliam, &c. Tertium est contra Septentriones, cui parti nulla est objecta terra,' &c.

(17) *What fearful groan was that ? . . p. 67.*

This exclamation happens not to be borrowed from Scott, but from king Solomon, to whom Sir Walter is indebted for it as well as myself.

(18) *Thalassio ! Thalassio !* . . p. 80.

Plutarch, Rom. Quæst.; 1 Virg. Ecl. viii.

(19) *With rich tapestry and garlands.* . . p. 85.

The art of making tapestry is of the highest antiquity, and may be satisfactorily traced back as far as the curtains made for the Hebrew Tabernacle in the wilderness.

‘Some of the meaner British captives Cæsar employed for services in the theatre, to attend the *tapestry hangings*, wherein he had caused to be curiously woven the figures of the Britons, and his victories over them. Of these, Virgil writes thus.

Purpureaque intexti tollant aulæa Britanni.’

Britannia Antiqua Illustrata.

(20)

Woman !

*Know'st thou this gory veil, this poniard blade,
Steeped in a husband's blood ?* . . p. 87.

‘When Dr. Donne took possession of his first living, he took a walk into the churchyard, where the sexton was digging a grave, and throwing up a skull, the doctor took it up, and found a *rusty headless nail* sticking in the temple, which he drew out secretly, and wrapped it up in the corner of his handkerchief. He then demanded of the grave-digger whether he knew whose skull that was. He said it was a man's who kept a brandy-shop ; an honest, drunken fellow, who one night having taken two quarts of brandy, was found dead in his bed next morning.—“Had he a wife ?” “Yes.” “What character does she bear ?” “A very good one, only the neighbours reflect on her because she married the day after her husband was buried.”

‘This was enough for the doctor, who, under the pretence of visiting his parishioners, called on her ; he asked her several questions, and among others, what sickness her husband died of. She giving him the same account he had before received, he suddenly opened the pocket handkerchief, and cried in an authoritative voice, “Woman, do you know this nail ?” She was struck with horror at the unexpected demand, instantly owned the fact, was tried, and executed.’

A friend, some years ago, told me a tale which he had read respecting a lady who murdered her husband, in the time, I think, of a plague, with a golden bodkin, for the purpose of marrying another man with whom she was passionately in love. I never, by any chance, have met with this story in print myself, and have but a very faint outline of my friend's recital of it ; but the shadow, as

it were, floating before my mind of that lady, is certainly the origin of the character of Claudia, a character, I conceive, new to the stage. How similar, or how unlike she may be to the lady of the golden bodkin, I have not the most distant idea, nor the means of judging, nor is it of the least consequence.

(21) *Of Cæsar's fleet are wrapt in struggling flames. . . p. 91.*

'While Cæsar was thus engaged in taking the Llan, or town (Verulam, or Gwerulan), the virtuous Cassibelaunus, warmed with the love of pure glory, was in continual action, investing the station at Rutupæ, destroying the naval camp, and capturing the Roman ships then at anchor at Deal.'—*History of Wales*.

(22) ——— in this awful synod
We sit as judges, by our sacred right,
Upon all criminals. . . p. 97.

The Druids.—'They pay the highest honours (says Diodorus Siculus of the Gauls) to their divines and philosophers, who are called Druids. It is their custom never to perform any sacred rite without one of these philosophers; for as they believe them to be *well acquainted with the will of the gods*, they think them the most proper persons to present both their thanksgivings and prayers.

'Diogenes Laertius places them in the same rank, in point of learning and philosophy, with the Chaldeans of Assyria, the Magi of Persia, and the Gymnosophists and Brachmins of India.

'It is acknowledged by all the writers of antiquity who mention the Druids, that they were greatly admired and respected by their countrymen, who not only listened with reverence and submission to their religious instructions, but also committed the two most important charges, the ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, and the education of their most noble youth, *entirely to their management*.'—*Henry's England*.

'Few dared to dispute their (the Druids) infallibility; but if by chance, an individual had so much temerity, he was punished by an excommunication so dreadful, as to be deemed more terrible than the cruellest death. From that moment, he was looked upon as a person abandoned by gods and men; universally hated and contemned, none would communicate with him; but he was suffered to drag through a miserable existence, till penury or sorrow snatched him from a world in which he could find neither pity nor relief.'—*Russell's History of England*.

'An interdicted person was deemed both impious and wicked; all fled from him, and avoided his presence and conversation, lest

they should be contaminated by the intercourse. He was allowed no legal rights. *He participated in no honours.*—Turner.

‘The reason why the Christian religion got footing so soon in Britain above other nations, among many causes this especially is given by historians, namely—the learning, piety, and devotion of the Druids, who were so eminent in this island, as that they decided and judged not only in spiritual, but civil affairs, and were resorted to like oracles for their profound judgment and skill in questions of the highest concern; and many of their tenets, of which the *immortality of the soul* was chief, were great inlets to that religion.’—*Brit. Antiq. Illustrated.*

[(23) *Treason to Britain and her liberty.* . . p. 98.

‘Whilst he (Cæsar) meditated a second descent, with powers more adequate to the enterprise, the treachery of a petty chieftain facilitated a success, which otherwise he might, perhaps, have sought in vain. This was the defection of Afarwy (Mandubratius), nephew of Cassibelan, and at this time chief in the Isle of Thanet and king of Kent: hence the name of this traitor is deservedly branded with infamy.’—*Early History of the Cymry.*

(24) *Is forthwith to be crucified amid
The sacred forest to the gods below!* . . p. 99.

Strabo says, ‘And other sacrifices of men by them are spoken of; for some they shoot with arrows, and some they crucify in the sacred groves.’

(25) *No, though that Bald-head's sword were at my throat!* p. 101.

Cæsar is alluded to in the Triads under the name of Bald-head. ‘Julius Cæsar, whom the Britons called Iolo Voel, or Julius the Bald.’

(26) *The warlike name of Britain.* . . p. 102.

‘The word Briton is derived from the Welsh appellative Brython, which truly signifies warriors; and thus also Brythwch, a battle. The term, therefore, as applied to the nation, signified the warriors.’—*Early History of the Cymry.*

(27) *While my strong shield this lion impress bears.* . . p. 102.

To pretend, as many do, that armorial bearings were not used prior to the Crusades, is perfectly absurd.

‘Painting.—Before the use of clothes was extended to the central and northern parts of Britain, the natives are observed to have painted their bodies, not by rubbing or besmearing them with colour, but in a much more artificial manner, and consisting of a variety of figures of beasts, birds, trees, herbs, and other things. But, in proportion as clothes came into general use among the ancient Britons, this practice of body-painting declined; and as soon as they were completely clothed, it was laid aside. But the art of painting did not suffer anything by that change: for in order to preserve their family distinctions and the ancient badges of their nobility, they then painted the same figures of various animals and other things on their shields, which they had formerly painted on their bodies. The art of painting even gradually improved, and those figures which had been painted of one colour only on their bodies, were painted of various colours, in imitation of life, on their shields.’—*Dr. Henry.*

King, in his *Munimenta Antiqua*, says, ‘armorial bearings seem clearly to have been introduced among the Gauls; for Diodorus, describing the long shields of the Gauls, which we have just referred to, says, they were varied with particular marks or colours, properly belonging to each individual person, lib. v., 213, p. 353, which perfectly accords with what Tacitus says concerning the Germans; that they distinguished their shields with the most nicely-chosen colours: *scuta tantum lectissimis coloribus distinguunt.*’—*Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum*, sec. vi.

And even the Indians of North America are not without their armorial paintings. Hearne, in one of his journals, speaking of the Indians on the Copper-mine River having received by their spies the news of an encampment of the poor Esquimaux about twelve miles off, says—‘after they had put their guns, targets, spears, &c., in order, we were ferried over the river, the doing of which, as we had only three canoes, took some considerable time. It must be observed, that before we set out on the west side, all the men painted their targets, some with the image of the sun, others with the moon, others with different kinds of birds and beasts of prey, and some had the images of fairies and other imaginary beings on them, which, according to their silly imaginations, are the inhabitants of the different elements, as the earth, sea, air, &c. Some were contented with a single representation, whilst others would have their targets covered to the very margin with hieroglyphics quite unintelligible.’

(28) *This Cæsar on the blood-drench'd plains of Gaul. . . p. 104.*

From Cæsar's narrative, it appears that the Britons had frequently sent auxiliaries to Gaul, a measure to which they might have been induced by the connexion subsisting between the two countries, in order to repel a foreign power, had there been no other motive; but at this time there was another, to which the Triads attribute the hostilities of Cæsar against this country. 'Cassibelan, enamoured of Flur, the daughter of Augnach Gorr, finding that she had been carried off by a prince of Gascony, called Mwrcan, and presented to Julius Cæsar, made a descent on Gaul; and having slaughtered six thousand of the Cæsarians, rescued and brought her back. Cæsar, to avenge himself, came into Britain.'—*Triad* 102 and 124.

Cæsar says, lib. iii., c. ix, that the Celtic Americans sent for some of the British tribes to aid them against his invasion of their territories; which, in c. xviii, he assigns as one of his reasons for invading Britain.

(29) *Those grinning skulls,
Which I, as gallant trophies, still have kept. . . p. 104.*

The British warriors preserved the bones of their enemies whom they slew; and Strabo says of the Gauls (who were, as he informs us, far less uncivilized than the Britons, but still nearly resembled them in their manners and customs), that when they return from the field of battle they bring with them the heads of their enemies fastened to the necks of their horses, and afterwards place them before the gates of their cities. Many of them, after being anointed with pitch or turpentine, they preserve in baskets or chests, and ostentatiously show them to strangers, as a proof of their valour; not suffering them to be redeemed, even though offered for them their weight in gold. This account is also confirmed by Diodorus. Strabo says that Posidonius declared he saw several of their heads near the gates of some of their towns,—a horrid barbarism, continued at Temple-bar almost down to the present period.

(30) *Thus at thy feet I cast,
In Cæsar's name, my javelin of defiance. . . p. 104.*

'Cæsar sent Volusenus in a ship of war to explore the coasts of Britain; but Volusenus, not venturing to land and treat with the inhabitants, threw the bloody spear on the British shore, and, in the Roman name, loudly declared war against the Britons.'—*History of Wales.*

'Cæsar first landed in Britain on the 26th of August, about five in the afternoon.'—See *Lowthorp's Abridgm. Philos. Trans.*, v. iii. p. 412.

Anthony Muret (Var. Lect. vi.) says, 'that some historian related that Julius Cæsar once made a voyage to Britain with a single galley and a hundred men; and being charmed with the wonderful beauty of the country, on his return, attempting to make a settlement there, he was forcibly driven out by the invincible inhabitants. This, if ever, must have happened when Cæsar, being about to sail to Britain, previously and alone, explored the harbours, navigation, and access to the island, as we are informed by Suetonius in *Julio Cæsare*, cap. lviii.

(31) (*An awful voice from one of the rock-idols is heard.*)

Let Arixina die! . . p. 108.

Girald Cambrensis gives an account of a speaking-stone at St. David's in Pembrokeshire.

'The next I shall notice is a very singular kind of a monument, which I believe has never been taken notice of by any antiquarian. I think I may call it an oracular stone: it rests upon a bed of rock, where a road plainly appears to have been made, leading to the hole, which at the entrance is three feet wide, six feet deep, and about three feet six inches high. Within this aperture, on the right hand, is a hole two feet diameter, perforated quite through the rock sixteen feet, and running from north to south. In the above-mentioned aperture a man might lie concealed, and predict future events to those that came to consult the oracle, and be heard distinctly on the north side of the rock, where the hole is not visible. This might make the credulous Britons think the predictions proceeded solely from the rock-deity. The voice on the outside was distinctly conveyed to the person in the aperture, as was several times tried.'—*Arch. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, vol. viii.

The moving stones, or Logans, were known to the Phœnicians as well as the Britons. Sanconiatho, in his Phœnician History, says, that Uranus devised the Bætylia, Gr.; Botal or Bothal, Irish; Bethel, Heb., or stones that moved *as having life*.—Damascius, an author in the reign of Justinian, says he had seen many of these Bætylia, of which wonderful things were reported, in Mount Libanus, and about Heliopolis in Syria.

(32) *Your souls shall transmigrate through reptile forms,
And animate the vilest, ugliest monsters! . . p. 110.*

'The Druids threatened those who dared to disobey their commands with a metempsychosis the most terrible after death.

‘The mysterious rites and worship of the infernal gods, according to Aylett Sammes, was practised in Britain. Among the British remains, is a MSS. of Triads, setting forth the doctrine of transmigration.’—See *Turner's Vindication of Ancient British Poems*.

- (33) *Hurl, like the cloud-bolts of the tempest skies,
Arrow, and spear, and stone, against the foe.* . . p. 111.

‘Some of them (the Britons) used slings for stones.’—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

- (34) *Let the two-handed sword like thunder fall,* . . p. 111.

‘One of the long and broad two-handed swords, which, there is great reason to think, actually belonged to a British chief, who resided in the neighbourhood, and was buried on the spot, was dug up at Chalens, in the Isle of Ely in 1757, together with a celt, or spear-head, the umbo of a shield, an urn, and a glass vase.’—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

One of the swords was also seen by Pennant at Talyskir in the Isle of Rum, one of the Hebrides. It was called a *claymore*.

- (35) *Your wolfish war-dogs, howling for the fight.* . p. 112.

‘They (the Britons) had a particular species of dogs most excellent for hunting, and so fierce, that the Gauls made use of them in war.’—*King*.

- (36) *In strength be like the mountain elk.* . . p. 112.

The elk, or leigh, a gigantic species of deer, existed in this country, and, in the ancient books on hunting, is enumerated in the class called ‘*beasts of swift flight*.’

- (37) *Or, braver still, preserve your country free!* . . p. 112.

The speeches of Cassfelyn to his soldiers throughout the drama are well supported by the following quotations:—

‘The British kings and chieftains, who were educated by the Druids, were, in particular, famous for their eloquence. This is evident from the many noble speeches that are ascribed to them by the Greek and Roman writers. For though these speeches may not be genuine, yet they are a proof that it was a well known fact, that these princes were accustomed to make harangues on these and the like occasions.

‘It is evidently sufficient to show that our British ancestors did

not wholly neglect the improvement of their minds, and the cultivation of the sciences ; and consequently that they did not deserve that contempt with which they have been treated by some of our own historians, nor the odious names of SAVAGES and BARBARIANS, which have been so liberally bestowed on them, as well as on other nations, by the supercilious literati of Greece and Rome.'—*Dr. Henry.*

' Tacitus says, the British chieftains before a battle fly from rank to rank, and address their men with animating speeches, tending to inflame their courage, increase their hopes, and dispel their fears.

' Their harangues were called, in the ancient language of Britain, *BROSNIHY KAH*, which is translated literally by Tacitus, *incitamenta belli*.'—*Ibid.*

(38) *Cæsar embarks, and Britain now is free ! . . p. 115.*

That the Romans did not look upon Cæsar's enterprise as an absolute conquest of Britain, we learn from authors of the best authority. Tacitus says, he did not conquer Britain, but only showed it to the Romans. Horace, in the time of Augustus, calls them "*Invictos Romano Marte*:" and Lucan scrupled not to affirm, that he turned his back in a fight, to the Britons, in quest of whom he went with such mighty preparations.

' *Territa quæsitis ostendit terga Britannis.*

—*Smollett's History of England.*

' Dion Cassius says, that in a battle the Britons routed the Roman infantry. Horace and Tibullus intimate, in several places of their writings, that, in their days, the Britons were not considered a conquered nation. " Many eminent authors relate," says Sammes, " that Cæsar, in his British proceedings, speaks too advantageously of himself."

' Tacitus writes of Caractacus, that, encouraging the Britons, he often invoked the manes of his ancestors, who drove Cæsar the Dictator out of the isle, by whose valour they were freed from the axes and tributes of the Romans, and preserved the bodies of their wives and children undefiled. And Dion affirms, that once in the second expedition all his foot were routed ; Orosius, that another time all his horse ; and it is manifest, that for many years after Britain was governed by its own kings, and its own laws.'—*Brit. Antiq. Illustrata.*

THE END OF ARIXINA.

EDWIN AND ELGIVA,

OR,

NORWEGIAN VENGEANCE.

A TRAGEDY.

‘ Submit, ye Laity ! ye profane !
Earth is the LORD’s, and therefore OURS ; let kings
Allow the common claim, and *half be theirs* ;
If not, behold ! the sacred lightning flies !’

* * * * *

‘ Mother of tortures ! PERSECUTING ZEAL,
High-flashing in her hand the ready torch,
Or poniard, bathed in unbelieving blood ;
Hell’s fiercest fiend ! of saintly brow demure,
Assuming a celestial seraph’s name,
While she, beneath the blasphemous pretence
Of pleasing PARENT HEAVEN, THE SOURCE OF LOVE,
Has wrought more horrors, more detested deeds,
Than all the rest combined.’—THOMSON.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EDWIN, King of England.

ERIC, a Norwegian, the dethroned and last King of North-
umberland.

ODO, Archbishop of Canterbury.

DUNSTAN, Abbot of Glastonbury.

RODOMOND, Chief of the Royal Scalds, or Minstrels.

EARL OSWALD, Friend to the King.

ROGVALDER, Friend to Eric.

REDWOLFGAR, Captain of a Band of Robbers.

ETHELWARD, a creature of Dunstan's.

Hermit.

GUTHLAC, a Minstrel.

1st Robber.

2nd Robber.

3rd Robber.

4th Robber.

Officer.

ELGIVA, the Queen.

GUNHILDA, ex-Queen of Northumberland.

CUTHBURGA, Mother to Elgiva.

Chiefs, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

Scene, the Palace at Winchester and Gloucestershire.



EDWIN AND ELGIVA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An open place near the Royal Palace at Winchester.*

Enter Eric on one side, dressed as a Saxon knight, and Rogvalder on the other, disguised as a wandering Saxon minstrel.

ROGVALDER.

Good stranger, wilt thou tell me if I'm near
The royal palace of the Saxon king?

ERIC.—(*Starting.*)

That voice!—Ye mighty gods of my forefathers!
O, how its tones remind me of past days
Of fame and glory!—Can it be that thou
Art my Rogvalder, still alive, and clad
In a poor wandering harper's simple weeds?

ROGVALDER.

Thunder of Odin! do these eyes behold
My prince, my friend, son of Norwegian Harold,
Northumbria's warlike king, vested in garb
Of vassal knight to some accursed Saxon? (1)

ERIC.

'Tis even so—Eric, in Norway called
“THE AXE OF BLOOD,” hath learnt, my friend, to bow (2)
His iron neck in homage to his foes.

ROGVALDER.

My hopes have then proved true—the tale was false—
Thou didst not perish on that blood-drenched field
Where fell five mighty kings, who fought beneath
Thy ocean banner, when with thy defeat
The kingdom of Northumberland was lost.

ERIC.

No, my Rogvalder, I have pined for years,
Since that disastrous day which Edred won,
In indigence, a pirate of the woods,
Prowling for Saxon plunder, and my sword
With Saxon blood oft gilding to the hilt !
But that was poor revenge—it could not quench
The struggling, raging fires of hatred here !
(*Laying his hand on his bosom.*)

ROGVALDER.

Deeply I mourned thy fate——

ERIC.

How meanly vile
Such petty warfare was to me, who oft,
Quitting the luxuries of regal sloth,
When on these brows Northumbria's diadem
Shone in full power and splendour, sought and won
The gallant sea-king's spoils—O, how those days
Of fame and glory gleam on my remembrance,
Like the last golden radiance of the west
When the bright sun's departed !

ROGVALDER.

Ay, those times
Were times of glory to the bold sea-rover,
When piracy was honourable craft. (3)

ERIC.

O, then with reckless spirit, flashing eye,

And sword of victory from my vessel's deck,
My throne of power, I viewed the subject-world ;
As forth I led the sea-kings of the north,
And all the hardy chiefs, who loved to sport
With Ocean in his wrath, around the coasts
Of Scotland's frightened land.—The western isles
Trembled to see my gallant ships lie moored
Within their harbours ; Cambria's princes fled
Before my glittering spear, and Erin's shores
Yielded a golden spoil !—nor did I spare
The Saxons' southern realms ; their blazing towns
Lighted me on to plunder, and my barks
Were loaded with their riches, while their maids
And bravest youths I sold as captive slaves
Far from their native homes. (4)

ROGVALDER.

By Odin's head,
It makes my spirit burn to hear thee speak
Of thy past deeds of fame.

ERIC.

Then did I reign
The sovereign of the ocean ! Glory spread
Her dazzling robe around me, and I shone
O'er all the mightiest sea-kings of the north
In wide renown, as blaze the meteor pomps
O'er the pale stars of midnight.

ROGVALDER.

Ay, my prince,
I too won honour in those gallant deeds
Of manly piracy.—Now coward merchants
Are honourable men, and the brave rover,
Who every peril scorns, and nobly wins

Spoil for a thousand barks, is basely deemed
Worthy the gallows-tree.

ERIC.

Yes, we are fallen
On luckless times—all ancient usages
Of ocean chivalry are passed away—
Our sun is set!—

ROGVALDER.

And we, what are we now?—
A vagrant harper, and a Saxon slave,
Are Eric and Rogvalder!

ERIC.

O, think not
I'd be a Saxon slave, to cringe and bow
To those my soul abhors—I who once sat
On Norway's throne, and ruled the stormy North,
But for the hope to win a full revenge
On Alfred's hated line.

ROGVALDER.

O, may I live,
Son of the storm and wave, to see the hour
That pours the balm of vengeance on thy wrongs,
So deeply rankling to life's inmost core!

ERIC.

What though his grandson Athelstan did give
Northumbria's vassal crown to me, when round
The summer isles a fugitive I roamed,
The lion of the sea; yet had he not
Ere that sent Haco, my detested brother,
Brought up i' th' soft refinements of his court,
To drive me from my native seat of power,
And hold dominion o'er my rebel subjects?

ROGVALDER.

Ah, fatal day ! when they young Haco called
To the Norwegian throne, thy father's gift.

ERIC.

And did not Edmund, heir to Athelstan,
Because I scorned to reign his royal slave,
But would be free the summer days to lift
The sea-king's plunder banner wheresoe'er
The blue waves bore me,—did not Edmund set
A price upon my head ?—But 'tis my joy
To think that, hid in robber's garb, I sought
The banquet hall where he held festival,
And plunged my war-knife deep into his heart !
Then, 'mid the wild confusion, unpursued,
Fled to the forest, while my follower fell
Covered with stabs and blood !— (5)

ROGVALDER.

A glorious blow !

Worthy thy gallant arm.

ERIC.

And did not Edred,
Who, at his death, filled England's regal seat,
When I was on the deep, Northumbria enter,
Destroying all before him ?—Soon I turned
Homeward my vessel's prow, and bravely met
The Saxon tyrant, who by Tadwine's cliff
Had forced my subjects, at the red sword's point,
To swear obedience.—But that battle-day
Thou know'st I won not, though fought gloriously—
I fell amid the slain, and since that hour
It is believed I fell to rise no more. (6)

ROGVALDER.

Short was the victor's triumph, for disease
Soon dragged him to the tomb.

ERIC.

When I stabbed Edmund,
That was my first revenge !—But while it throbs,
This heart will never know one hour of peace,
Till I have all the Saxon line destroyed !

ROGVALDER.

And what are now the plans by which thou hopest
To win fresh vengeance for long years delayed ?

ERIC.

I have no settled plan, but, like the tiger,
In ambush crouch, ready with yell of joy
To spring upon my victim.—Yes, I wait
To see dissensions rise between this boy,
This son of Edmund, and those factious chiefs
Who throng his court.

ROGVALDER.

Command me—let me share
The danger and the glory of thy vengeance.

ERIC.

Here is my hand—thou soon shalt find employ.
Rogvalder, thou behold'st great Norway's king
Sunk from his glory down to a poor knight
E'en of a Saxon priest.—But little knows
This primate of all England, how I hate
Him and his Christian creed, though at the font
One of his saintly herd marked on these brows
The sign o' th cross, on which their God was hung ;
While Athelstan stood sponsor for my faith,
And set Northumbria's crown upon my head.

ROGVALDER.

I grieve to find thy just revenge delayed.

ERIC.

It may be nearer than thou think'st, my friend.
This is young Edwin's coronation day ;
Some circumstance from that perchance will rise,
Which I may to my deadly purpose shape,
And from it pluck revenge.

ROGVALDER.

It was, my prince,
The regal festival which led me here
To join the minstrel bands (7)—Thou know'st the harp
Was ever my delight in festive hall,
And how I oft awoke its strings to chant
Thy warlike deeds upon the ocean wave.

ERIC.

Brave sharer of my glory, we again,
After long years of parting, are united.
Come with me to Gunhilda, who will joy
To see thee still alive. Thy presence adds,
My brave Norwegian, to that raging thirst
Of vengeance which consumes my inmost soul !
I feel the time draws near—O, we will have
A great revenge, great as my burning wrongs ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A grand Saxon Hall in the Royal
Palace.*

Enter Rodomond.

RODOMOND.

This is a day in which I shall be crowned
As well as Edwin—crowned with fame, not gold,

The paltry god of fools ; nor earth-born gems
Which borrow light to shine—The precious stones
Of Genius will be my bright coronal,
Radiant in their own glory as the stars !
My coronation ode is now complete—
Each line is worth St. Peter's beard and hair, (8)
Ay, and the relic of St. Basil's ribs
To boot !—O that the hour of banqueting
Were come, that I might chant it in the hall !

Enter Gunhilda. (9)

GUNHILDA.

What, royal bard, in the deep musings wrapt
Of thy wild flights of fancy ?

RODOMOND.

No, fair dame,
Not wrapt in flights of fancy, but in joy,
The real substantial joy of deathless fame,
Which shall be mine a thousand ages hence,
When this great day is chronicled and marked
In the long roll of time.

GUNHILDA.

Why, one might think
Thou, and not Edwin, England's kingly heir,
Wert this day to be crowned.

RODOMOND.

And so I am—

GUNHILDA.

Eh !—

RODOMOND.

Woman, I now tell thee that these brows
Shall with a nobler diadem be bound

Than th' envied Saxon crown ! The ode which I
Have on th' approaching coronation penned
Is——O, I cannot tell what 'tis—
My modesty prevents me—words would fail
To paint its beauties—its sublimities—

GUNHILDA.

What pity 'tis that modesty so rare
Should, like a veil, hide so much excellence!

RODOMOND.

It cannot long be hid—it must burst forth
In all its intellectual blaze of glory!
'Tis a rich mine, filled with poetic gems,
A crowded garden of sweet-smelling flowers!
Which, blended, for these brows will form a wreath,
Whose splendours, when a thousand earthly crowns
Have faded, like a meteor, still will shine,
Another sun in its unborrowed light!
O Genius, Genius!

So fondly hast thou wrapt my dizzy head
In dazzling floods of glory, that I fear
I shall destroy my hearers with the blaze
That will burst from me in the shouting hall!

GUNHILDA.

Why, minstrel fool, art thou so vain to think
The twangling of thy harp can o'er thee fling
A brighter splendour than the regal state
And warlike majesty of sceptred kings?
Away, dull slave! thou ne'er hast known the pomp
That waits on princes seated on a throne,
'Mid flattering throngs of courtiers, who the knee
Of homage bend; thy form of vulgar clay
Has ne'er been mounted in triumphal car,
The worshipped lord of battle, at whose nod

The vanquished nations tremble—Vaunt no more !
I hate to hear lean-witted slaves deery
Those honours which the nobly great enjoy,
And which themselves, being ignobly born,
Can never hope to win.

RODOMOND.

Dull minstrel fool !

Lean-witted slave !—God of the tuneful lyre !
Have I been made the king's chief Scald for this ?
I, on whose happy birth kind Nature showered
Her richest gifts, and gave me brighter wit
Than ever fell before to mortal lot !
Why, I was in my very cradle rocked
By the bright god of poets into dreams
Of——

GUNHILDA.

Self-conceit—from which thou ne'er hast woke.

RODOMOND.

And all the Muses nursed me on their bosoms,
From which I drew poetic streams of milk,
That have immortal made me——

GUNHILDA.

As the winds

That pipe at midnight through the storm-shook woods,
And die ere morning, to be heard no more ;
None heeding whence they came, nor where they go.

RODOMOND.

Thou envious woman, my renown in song
Shall be as lasting as my endless themes,
And brighten as it onward moves through time :
A sun, in which all rival stars are lost !

GUNHILDA.

Thy foster-nurses, thou vain suckling braggart,
Have filled thee with such arrogant conceits,
That on the clouds of vanity thou walk'st,
Making thy banquet of the empty air,
The reeky breath of popular applause
Which in its birth expires—

RODOMOND.

No, lady, we
Court-minstrels live on more substantial food,
And leave *poor* bards—no matter for their merit—
To feast on that light diet.

GUNHILDA.

O, I'd rather be
A moping owl, and hoot the listless moon
From some lone, haunted tower, than sweat to win,
By slender wit, the praise of drunken chiefs
Carousing o'er the wine-cup.

RODOMOND.

Barbarous woman !
Dost thou not know that we who strike the harp
Are the companions and time-honoured friends
Of mightiest kings, whose proudest deeds would be
Of little moment, if not sung by us,
In hall and bower ?—Fame lives not with the sword :
The pride of martial glory is a shadow,
Which dies when the proud sun of power is set,
Unless the harp give immortality. (10)

Enter Eric and Rogvalder.

ERIC.

Chief of the royal minstrels, I now bring

A brother of the harp, who fain would join
Your coronation melodies, and strike
His strings at banquet-hour before the king.

RODOMOND.

Whence comes the wandering Scald?—I know him not—
His mean appearance speaks him meritless.
Some vain pretender to the art, no doubt,
Who strolls through villages, and twangs his wires
At cottage doors, charming the hinds and serfs
With his vile strains. The fair, and market-cross,
And well-frequented bridge, are places where
Such minstrels should resort. (11)

ROGVALDER.

Uncourteous Scald!

I in the halls of noble chiefs have sat,
The minstrel of the feast—

RODOMOND.

No doubt, and feasted
Well for thy pains—Go, get thee there again!

ROGVALDER.

Nay, in the courts of Scandinavian kings
Have won applause——

RODOMOND.

Thy own, I question not.
Presumptuous vagrant! wouldst thou dare to join
Our band select, within whose sacred circle
None are permitted to attempt the art,
Save the high-favoured few approved by me?

ROGVALDER.

Hear me but touch these strings—

RODOMOND.

Away! thy touch
Would be to me the screechings of the death-bird!

So finely tuned, so critical my ear,
The slightest discord would unhinge my frame,
And send me in a fever to my couch.

GUNHILDA.

Thou merit'st the blue plague, and none to tend thee !

ERIC.

Without a hearing dost thou dare condemn ?

RODOMOND.

A hearing ! Heaven assoil me from such torment !
We by the minstrel judge the minstrel's works,
Laud, or condemn, by party's stern decrees.
At our tribunal none can mercy find
Who are not of our school.

GUNHILDA.

Nor they, unless
Thou think'st their merit 's far below thine own—
The very dregs of Genius—Would thou wert
My household minstrel, I would have thee kept
On sour pottage and hard haberdine,
Till thou hadst learnt some justice.

ERIC.

He would starve first.

GUNHILDA.

So do I think ; and had I now my will,
His next song should be, like the dying swan's,
His own funereal lay. (12)

RODOMOND.

Die when ye will,
No bard for you shall raise the noble song !
Inglorious shall ye both sink to the grave,
And rot in dark oblivion !—As for thee,
Thou travel-tainted vagrant, get thee gone !
The Saxon court is not the place wherein

The drivellings of thy muse can e'er be heard.
Go, strike thy wires, lout-headed, herd-groom witling,
And chant thy songs to dancing bears and beggars. (13)
[Exit Rodomond.]

ERIC.

Regard him not, self-idolizing fool !
Yes, we will strike, my friend ; but it shall be
Nor lyre nor tabor, but the hearts of Saxons,
Whose death-groans will to us be sweeter music
Than e'er the magic harp of Odin breathed !
Gunhilda, in this minstrel vest behold
Rogvalder, whom we long have mourned as dead.

GUNHILDA.

Ha ! 'tis the bosom friend of my brave husband !
Welcome, Rogvalder, if th' unqueened Gunhilda
Can give thee welcome in a stranger's halls.

ERIC.

See, Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, comes !
Let us withdraw, and schemes of vengeance plan.

ROGVALDER.

Say but the word, my prince, and I will stab
This Saxon monarch, heir to thy just hate,
Before the altar, at his coronation !

ERIC.

Then wouldst thou fall.

ROGVALDER.

O, glorious thus to die,
Winning revenge for thee !

ERIC.

If fall we must,
Together we will perish—but as yet
We must be wary.—This way—follow me. [Exeunt.]

Enter Dunstan and Ethelward.

DUNSTAN.

Again I move in England's regal court,
From which by envious foes I once was driven ;
Accused by fools of dealing with the devil
For magic purposes, because I shone
In the ennobling sciences above
The comprehension of their swinish minds.

ETHELWARD.

I should not think, lord Abbot of Glastonbury,
That the old fiend of sin would wish to hold
Or intercourse or friendship with your lordship,
After th' unceremonious treatment he
Met at your midnight cell—Surely his nose
Must still retain the marks of your red tongs ;
For long you held him in your gripe, 'tis deemed,
From his continued shrieks and hideous howlings.

DUNSTAN.

O, how religion can be made to fool
And gull the multitude by specious show
Of zeal, austerity, visions, and prayers,
And feigned wrestlings with the Evil One !
The people little think—poor simple souls !—
That I it was who those strange bellowings made,
Which passed for Beelzebub's. (*Aside.*)

ETHELWARD.

No doubt, my lord,
He came with ill intent.

DUNSTAN.

True, Ethelward ;
But I his coming turned to good account :
My sanctity and victory o'er the fiend

Brought wealth as well as fame.—Edmund the king
I drew to my dark cell, and soon was made
Lord Abbot of Glastonbury.—On these brows
The mitre of that ancient convent rests,
And I, a mate for loftiest earls and kings,
Precedence take e'en of St. Alban's lord.
And I'm the keeper of the royal treasures ;
Those golden stores, amassed by many kings,
Are in the coffers of my abbey kept.

ETHELWARD.

By Joseph's blooming staff, you must, my lord,
Be e'en the happiest liegeman England holds.

DUNSTAN.

Alas ! nor fame, nor power, nor wealth can yield
True happiness ; I find it to my cost !—
Thou wast my bosom friend ere I was great,
And know'st another passion than ambition
Filled this now cold, dead heart—I loved a maid ; (14)
O she was fair and pure as angel forms,
And when I wandered with her in the groves,
As to the nightingale's wild music rose
The cloudless moon, and leaf and flower were bathed
In dewy light—then I indeed was happy.

ETHELWARD.

A virgin love is a bewitching thing—
It makes one melt like wax before a fire !
I do remember once upon a time—
But 'tis no matter—I have done with love,
And all its soft beguilements.

DUNSTAN.

How frequent still the tones of her soft voice
Come on my ear in cell and altar-aisle,
Sweet as the lark's last song at evetide hour ;

And midnight visions of her beauty oft
Disturb my holier dreams.

ETHELWARD.

Ay, I remember,
She was a comely, buxom wench, with such
A well-turned ankle, and a neck that might
Be for its whiteness with the swan's compared !
And then her eye !—O, I can ne'er forget
The brilliant twinkle of its languishment !
It warmed one's very heart—But I have done
With praising female beauty.

DUNSTAN.

I was won
By a kinsman's strong entreaties to become
The inmate of a cell—O, Ethelward,
It was a dreadful struggle ! but religion
Conquered the earthly passion, and I took
The habit of Benedict.—Ambition now,
For rule and high preferment in the church,
Possesses all my soul.

ETHELWARD.

And glorious is
The course which you have taken—one step more,
And England's primacy will then be your's ;
For Odo's head is bowed beneath the weight
Of many years.

DUNSTAN.

Yes, I ere long shall be
(For early visions have foretold my greatness) (15)
Prince of the hierarchy ! and then, my friend,
The topmost hill of glory is in view—
The triple crown, the apostolic throne,
Seat of St. Peter, at whose golden footstool

Emperors and kings bow down !—Withdraw awhile,
For Odo comes, th' Archbishop of Canterbury.

[*Exit* Ethelward.

Now is the time for me to climb to power
In state as well as church—A minor's reign
Showers golden opportunities on him
Who can keep place beside the sovereign's throne,
To be the grand dictator of the realm.
Edwin is young, and in his manners mild ;
I must contrive to keep him still in awe,
And mould his mind to all our great designs ;
I then shall be the ruler of the land.

Enter Odo.

O, good my lord
Of Canterbury, humbly on my knee
Your sacred benediction do I crave.

ODO.

Thou hast my blessing—but kneel not to me ;
The church is honoured by so young a saint.
Thy penances, thy fastings, thy abode
In a sepulchral cell, where thou didst put
The awful enemy of man to flight—
That splendid pile which thou hast reared for heaven,
Making the order of Benedict its rules, (16)
As an example to degenerate monks—
All point thee out to be a shining star,
A glorious light in this declining age
Of scandal to the priesthood.

DUNSTAN.

O, my lord,
My poor deservings merit not such praise.
I am but an unprofitable servant

E'en at the best—yet would I gladly spill
My heart's best blood in this most righteous cause
Of reformation.

ODO.

We, my lord, must move
The king to our good purpose; then we'll rouse
All England to adopt the discipline
Of Benedict.

DUNSTAN.

The idle and profane—
Such are the greater portion of our clergy,
It grieves me much to say—shall take the cowl,
And with austerities amend their lives.
We'll have no married priests—O, it will be (17)
A glorious revolution in the church!
I burn with ardour to commence the work.

ODO.

Well, Dunstan, do I know thy holy zeal
To clear the fold, and from the tainted flock
Turn out those shepherds who walk not with us
In the new light given to the favoured few.
This royal scion, this young twig will bend
As we incline it, and the church shall then
Cast forth the evil-minded, and become
Pure and unblameable.—But we must now
Onward to crown the king. (*Trumpets at a distance.*)

Those trumpet sounds
Speak the procession ready to attend
Our monarch, in his coronation robes,
To yon cathedral aisles. [*Exit Odo.*]

DUNSTAN.

I come, my lord.
The skilful bard wins fame and royal grace

By noble verse, and sounds which on the ear
Melodious rapture fling—The warrior gains
Renown and glory in the battle-field,
And makes his sword the sceptre of dominion—
But not for me are now such paths to power :
One only way, Ambition, is there left,
By which I can attain thy radiant heights.
Religion is the field for me to shine in.
I'll make the superstition of the age
My noble steed to bear me on to glory,
And in hypocrisy's close mail ensheath'd,
Like a brave knight, bear all opposers down ;
Then I in future ages as a saint
By dreaming fools shall be revered and worshipped !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of Winchester in the back ground, with the grand Entrance to the Cathedral on one side of the stage, near the front.*

Enter a train of Virgins, strewing flowers, from the Palace—then a procession of Monks and Clergy bearing censers, crosses, and sacred pictures—files of soldiers with banners and martial music. Officers of the King's household, with swords of state, the sceptre, the imperial crown of all the Saxons borne on a cushion—the holy oil for the anointing, carried by a Bishop—a large globe on a spear, the regal insignia of the Saxon kings. The King in his royal robes, led between ODO, the Archbishop, and Dunstan, under a magnificent canopy of state, other Prelates following in their pontifical habits. The Priests, chanting the Anthem, Officers, and Soldiers, close the Procession. The stage crowded with the populace—a general shout as the King appears.

The procession passes across the stage, and enters the doors of the Cathedral. Eric and Rogvalder stand near the bottom of the stage.

The Anthem.

Hail to the son of Alfred's line !
Whose brows shall wear the golden sign
Of England's regal power—

Blessings and joys on him descend,
Prolong his race till time shall end ;
Sound the loud trump, hail the glad hour,
And triumph shout to his kingly power,
Shout all, God bless the king !

May Victory her bright pinions spread
Around his balm-anointed head,
England's redoubted tower ;
Let glory circle his proud throne,
And Ocean his dominion own.—
Sound the loud trump, proclaim his power,
And hail his coronation hour,
Shouting, God bless the king !

ERIC.

O, that the anointing balm poured on his brows
Were rankest venom from the serpent's jaws !
Or crimson lava from the thunder-womb
Of stormy Hecla flung, till clinging fires
Burnt to the very marrow of his bones,
And, maddened with fierce torments, he dashed out
His smoking brains upon the altar stone !

ROGVALDER.

Would it not give thee equal joy to see
This war-knife thus far dipt in his heart's blood ?

ERIC.

Yes—no !—I'd have him linger years in pain—
Years are too short—ages would scarce suffice
To satisfy the cravings of revenge !
Two royal crowns have from these brows been torn
By his detested house !—The earth and sea
Both, both were my dominions ; I was lord

Of the wide ocean, and my warlike name
Made all the nations tremble!

ROGVALDER.

True, my prince.

ERIC.

And now am I a wretched, skulking slave!
Prating to thee of dagger-blows and stabs
At one poor heart, whom death would quickly ease
Of every pang—O, this proud festival
Will madden me!—it tells me of the pomp,
The sceptred power, and majesty of kings,
Which once were mine, but can be mine no more!

[*Music heard.*

ROGVALDER.

Hear me, my lord——

ERIC.

Hark!—how the music peals

In thunder from yon temple gates!—To me
It sounds like adders' hisses in the ears
Of a sad captive, doom'd in darksome cell
To perish by their stings. (*Shouts and trumpets.*

Ha! now they set
The crown upon his head!—Mine is torn off,
And trampled in the dust!—Now, now they kneel,
And pay their worship in repeated shouts
To that detested boy!—O, had I but
The strength of that ferocious wolf who, when
The end of all things comes, shall break his chain, (18)
And men and gods devour, then would I rush
Within yon portal, and both king and people
Rend limb from limb, and strew their bleeding fragments
O'er altar, tomb, and shrine!

[*Rushes wildly off, followed by Rogvalder.*

SCENE II.—*A room of state in the palace.**Enter Elgiva and Cuthberga.*

ELGIVA.

O, happy day! may the propitious stars
 Pour down their kindest influence as the crown
 Rests on his sacred brows; may angels shake
 Around him from their bright empurpled wings
 The richest odours of their heavenly clime;
 And the blest Virgin Mother sacred balm
 Upon the anointed shed—O, may his reign (19)
 Resplendently as yonder sunbeams shine,
 And, scattering far the stormy clouds of state,
 Fade full of years and glory!—Why, dear lady,
 Dost thou not share my joy?—Those tears but ill
 Besort the splendours of this festal day,
 In which all England triumphs.

CUTHBERGA.

Ah, my child,

I know not why, but there is a dark cloud
 Comes o'er that happiness I fain would feel,
 Big with prophetic fears that some strange woe
 Is hastening onward to o'erwhelm us all!

ELGIVA.

Away with such weak fancies, and let joy
 Alone possess thy soul——

CUTHBERGA.

Alas! I strive,

But cannot check these sighs.

ELGIVA.

My swelling heart

Beats high with rapture—not that I am queen

Of many nations in this seagirt isle;
No—not a taint of pride distains my bliss :
My pleasures have a brighter, nobler source.
I joy because the honours of this day
Are worn by him I love—I joy that now (20)
Merit may claim my smiles to make her happy ;
That he who wanders naked I can clothe—
The hungry feed ; and by example show
That England's queen will only cherish virtue ;
Nor in secluded pomp live for herself,
But for her people's good.

CUTHBERGA.

Ah, my sweet child,
'Twere cruel now to damp those joys which rise
From a young heart so innocent as thine.

ELGIVA.

O that my joy could win from thee a smile ;
For still a mother's smiles to my glad heart
Are like the sunshine on the fields of spring.

CUTHBERGA.

Thine is a primrose path at life's gay morn,
Strewed with the sweetest flowers of hope and joy ;
Honour his sunny beams of glory flings
O'er all the laughing landscape, and the winds
Are full of music as they breathe around thee.
O, may no tempest rise, no dark despair
Come o'er the brightness of thy blissful dawn !

ELGIVA.

Yes, mine is bliss indeed—for love alone
Has made the noble, kingly Edwin mine.
O, were he but a low-born peasant youth,
Tending on the green mountain's side his flock,
And for the regal crown, the gorgeous pomp,

Which now encircle him, a wild-flower wreath
Smiled on his marble brows, he would to me
Be all my tender, unambitious heart
Could love, or form a wish for here on earth.

CUTHBERGA.

Great are the duties which thy lofty station,
As England's queen, demands to be performed.

ELGIVA.

Yes, dearest mother, it hath pleased high heaven,
And our most glorious king, to place me next
Himself in majesty ; therefore I stand
Before the nation as a guiding light,
A beam of glory on which all will gaze,
As the tired sea-boy eyes the polar star ;
Clouds of disgrace shall ne'er bedim the fire
Of virtuous honour which within me burns,
For I would leave in Time's historic page
A name immortal, on which future ages
Might pause with love and reverence.

CUTHBERGA.

I'll not fear
Thou wilt disgrace thy queenly dignity.

ELGIVA.

Never, I trust, shall pride or cruel scorn
E'en to the lowest in these realms obstruct
Those generous feelings I now cherish here.
The good of all degrees my love shall share,
And win my utmost bounty.—I would have
The English court to be sweet Virtue's home,
From whence the splendours of her light shall shine
Throughout this noble isle. (*Harp struck without.*)

What sounds are those,

Struck by a master hand? But O to me
All sounds are tuneful on this happy day.

Enter Rogvalder.

ROGVALDER.

Permit, fair queen, a minstrel, who has swept
In many a highborn lady's bower the strings
To love and gallant deeds, a lay to chant
On this proud festival.

ELGIVA.

Welcome to me
The minstrel harp that chants my Edwin's praise,
The pride of all the Saxons.

ROGVALDER.

I've obtained
Admittance here with an intent to plunge
This dagger in the bosom of the queen,
And give the deepest pangs to Edwin's heart
Ere his own fate shall come—but such her beauty
And her gentle bearing, that I stand awe-struck,
As if some form of other worlds appeared
Before me in their glory! Yet would I
Eric revenge, whose bosom-treasured wrongs
Fling on his soul the tempest-clouds of madness. (*Aside.*)

ELGIVA.

Why, gentle Scald, dost thou not touch the wires?
For I in latticed gallery dearly love
To listen to the minstrel's magic chords.
I hold him light and worthless who pays not
Honour and homage to the sons of song.
Genius deserves the worship of the world!
Green live his garlands when the hero's fade;

For he it is who o'er all earthly things
A sunniness of sweet enchantment flings.

ROGVALDER.

Witchcraft is in her voice, and in her eye
A heaven-like brightness that would melt to love
The sternest sea-king's heart ! (*Aside.*)

CUTHBERGA.

Let us withdraw—

There is a fierceness in that dark man's glance
Which makes me tremble !

ROGVALDER.

I will turn away

My face and do the deed ; for if I look
On beauty so divine, though at her breast
This dagger gleamed, I should repent, and from
My nerveless grasp would fall the knife of vengeance.

(*Aside.*)

[*Rogvalder advances, with his face averted, towards the queen ; and as he suddenly lifts his dagger to stab her, Rodomond enters, and seizes his arm, snatching the dagger from him. Elgiva shrieks, and sinks into the arms of her mother.*]

RODOMOND.

Ha ! scowling fiend of hell, would'st thou destroy
The queen, whom as a saint her subjects worship ?

ROGVALDER.

Ay, thou intrusive slave ! e'en she, and all
In whose detested veins flow Saxon blood !

RODOMOND.

Not, by the holy rood-tree, while one drop
Of Saxon blood warms this devoted heart,
Whether a man or demon, shalt thou harm
One hair of my loved mistress.—I would grapple

E'en with the ramping lion to preserve
My queen from danger. Ho! within there, guards!

ROGVALDER.

Away, base reptile! from me take thy hand,
Or I, the war-wolf of the north, will place
This foot upon thy neck, and strangle thee!

[*Rogvalder shakes off Rodomond, and is about to
rush upon him, when the guards enter and seize the
pirate.*

RODOMOND.

Why, by the good St. Stephen's blood, thou art
That shag-eared ruffian, that base beggar's dog,
Who aped our high profession!—Thou a Scald!
Well did I count thee for some banished rogue,
Some midnight murderer, when I first beheld
Thy wolfish visage. Tear the minstrel vest
From off his back, and to a dungeon bear
The dunghill cur, the loathsome coystrell coward!

ROGVALDER.

A coward! would I had thee sword to sword!
My eagle blood should prove thy coystrell breed,
And make thee howl with terror!

RODOMOND.

Craven slave!

Stabber of women!—peace, thou foul disgrace
And blot to manhood! Now I do bethink me:
Thou hither camest with Harold, Odo's knight,
A strange, suspicious-looking—friend of thine—

ROGVALDER.

I know him not for any friend of mine.
I stand alone in this my bloody purpose,
And am content to suffer for its failure,

RODOMOND.

Suffer thou shalt, ere long——

(Trumpets and loud shouts.)

Those trumpet tones

And joyous shouts of multitudes proclaim

The coronation ended, and the king

Returning to the banquet. Guards, lead off

That regicide to prison. *(Rogvalder is led off.)*

ELGIVA.

Rodomond,

To thee I owe my life, and I will ever

Esteem thee my preserver.—Take thou these

Resplendent bracelets, as a token given

Of gratitude eternal.

CUTHIBERGA.

Rodomond,

Behold me kneel, the mother of a queen,

A thousand times to thank thee for the life

Of a beloved child.—Take thou and wear

This chain of gold, bedecked with costly gems,

A token of thy bravery.

ELGIVA.

Thou shalt be,

Good Rodomond, ennobled, and become

One of the king's own thanes.

RODOMOND.

O, pardon me,

I have but done my duty—yet, in honour

Of you, fair dames, I'll wear these precious gifts,

Proud to have saved from danger England's queen.

But for ennobling me—you will forgive

My bold avowal—but I needs must deem

I lack not true nobility, who am

The king's chief minstrel. Genius has done more
Than Odin's blood could do to make me noble.
He from whose lips immortal music breathes,
In poesy, the language of the gods, (21)
And pours a glory o'er the deeds of kings,
Claims rank and homage with the proudest chiefs.

ELGIVA.

Noble I deem thee, Rodomond, in song,
And noble too in valour.

RODOMOND.

That just tribute
Paid to my talents better pleases me,
By the blest rood, than all these sparkling gems. [*Aside.*
Sure there is not the basest carl that lives,
But with his heart's best blood well-pleased would part
To save from ruffian stabs a beauteous queen !

ELGIVA.

My study, Rodomond, shall be to learn
How to reward thy merits.

RODOMOND.

It is meet
You should be told I hither came to rehearse
My coronation ode—O, every line
Is a rich honey-bearing marigold,
And every verse a cluster of all flowers,
Gathered in poesy's bright golden meads,
From which the minstrels of succeeding ages
May steal, like morning bees, a thousand sweets,
Wherewith to scent their wild and stinking weeds.

ELGIVA.

And dost thou sing it in the warriors' hall ?

RODOMOND.

Undoubtedly—but much I fear my hearers

Will not be able to endure its pomp.
O, as I wandered in the lily fields
Of fancy, such a sudden blaze of splendours
Burst on my head, that ever has it since
Seemed as if all my brains were turned to light !
Do you not, ladies, mark its radiance shine
In sparks, and rays, and twinklings from these eyes,
When of my ode I speak ?—Without one jot
Of vanity, in justice I declare
That measures so replete with gems and flowers
Have never yet been poured to harp or lyre !
But I must to the king, that he may learn
What danger threatened her he loves so well.

ELGIVA.

Stay, Rodomond,—I would not for the world
Cast such a cloud upon the splendid joys
Of this day's festival——

RODOMOND.

But your escape,
And my grand ode, will make all clear again.

ELGIVA.

This day of England's glory should be full
Of sunniness, like summer's shadeless noon.
O, not one drop of bitter grief would I
Cast in his coronation-cup of joy,
Or mar that proud delight his heart now feels
At banquet-hour 'mid Britain's high-born chiefs.
Silence then rest upon thy lips this day,
Nor breathe the danger past.

RODOMOND.

I shall observe
Most faithfully my glorious queen's commands.
O, what a subject for my muse to-morrow !

Myself the hero too !—The court, the city,
Ay, and all England, with my fame will ring.

[*Exit.*

CUTHBERGA.

My child, my queen, I now believe we oft
Are warned by ministers of heaven, in dreams
And dark forebodings, of those fatal ills
Which are to come upon us.—Still my heart
Presages deeper woes !

ELGIVA.

O, cherish not
That mood of sadness ; danger all is past.
My heart no room can find for grief or fear.
My Edwin reigns, and in his honours I
Am blest beyond desert, beyond my hopes.

CUTHBERGA.

I own thou hast attained an envied seat
Of happiness on earth—long be it thine !

ELGIVA.

O, but for words to paint his manly beauty !
The phoenix of the age !—His cheeks would make
The dew-rose blush with envy ; his blue eye,
Clear as the heavens, with intellectual glory
Beams bright as morn's young star ; his gracious smile
Spreads gladness like the dawn on all observers ;
His voice is music tuned to love, and still
Such majesty and grace dwell in his form,
That like a god in mortal shape he moves !— (22)
But see !—he comes.—Quickly, my lady mother,
Dispel that cloud of sadness from thy brow,
And welcome him, like me, with smiles of joy.

Enter King Edwin in his royal robes of ceremony, and the crown on his head.

EDWIN.

At length have I escaped the crowded hall,
The wassail bowl, the banquet, and the din
Of chiming harps, the shout of warrior chiefs,
Those boasting lifters of the rubied cup,
Who in their boisterous mirth no limits keep,
With all the proud solemnity of state,
To fly to the sweet quiet of thy arms,
My queen, my life, my love! (*Embracing Elgiva.*)

ELGIVA.

Joy to my lord

On this auspicious morn! With rapturous tears
To Heaven I kneel, and pray that England's crown—
Set on thy head this day—long, long may grace
Those brows with glory, happiness, and fame!
May'st thou inherit all thy people's care—
And well thy virtues merit their affections;—
As Heaven's high regent be thou feared for justice,
For victory honoured, and for mercy loved;
And may all pray with me—God bless the king!

CUTHBERGA.

Daughter, I kneel with thee, and say—Amen!
And may the saints, who guard the good, avert
All evil from him—and a mother's blessing
Be on you both, my children!

EDWIN.

Rise, honour'd lady, rise my dear-loved wife;
Let me embrace you both: I'm sorely wearied
With keeping state, with pageantry and pomp.

It is no easy life to bear this load
Of cumbrous pride that hangs upon a king.
Off, glittering ensign of regality !
Ambition's blood-stained idol—lie thou there !

(Takes off his crown, and flings it on the ground.)

O, how reviving thus to cast aside
The gorgeous shackles of a kingly state,
And hold sweet converse with the minds we love
In freedom unrestrained.

ELGIVA.

'Tis bliss indeed !

EDWIN.

O, my Elgiva ! it is like the freshness
Of the sun-brightened landscape, gemmed with flowers,
In summer's rainbow dyes, to him who long
In dungeon gloom has shook his heavy chains,
And sighed for liberty.

Enter Dunstan and a Bishop.

Ha ! who comes here ?

How now, Abbot of Glastonbury ! what means this ?
Thus to intrude upon my private hours,
Devoted to domestic peace and love !
Am I a king ?

DUNSTAN.

Not by thine actions, boy.

EDWIN.

Boy ! audacious priest ! but hence, nor move my wrath !
I will not be disturbed.

DUNSTAN.

Nay, but thou shalt.—
Thou hast disturbed the mirth of all thy chiefs,

Ethelings, and thanes, who throng the festive hall,
By thy untimely absence.—Art thou mad,
Thus to forget thy dignity and place,
And treat thy princely courtiers with contempt,
Scorning their fellowship?

EDWIN.

I scorn them not ;
Nor is my bounty lessened by my absence.
I have dispensed my money-gifts and lands,
Steeds richly harnessed, swords, and glittering mail ;
Largess unbounded I bestowed on all.
My tables groan beneath the sumptuous feast ;
My cupbearers replenish still their bowls,
O'erflowing with delicious mead and wine ;
What would they more?

DUNSTAN.

The presence of their king.

EDWIN.

I'm weary of their noisy revelry,
And choose retirement from the scenes of riot.

DUNSTAN.

Is this a time for dalliance in the bower,
The wanton bower, of thy fond lady-love ?
This is the day that England's diadem
Was placed upon thy head, amid the shouts
Of England's bravest spirits—yet thou scorn'st
To hold communion with those mighty chiefs
Who chose thee for their king, and hither comest (23)
To toy and prattle with a love-sick woman ;
To feed upon an amorous lip, and melt
Thy soul away in the lascivious fires
That dart bright witchery from her rolling eye !

Awake from such weak folly ere too late,
And take a manly spirit.

EDWIN.

Ah, beware !

Or thou wilt rouse a lion spirit here
That shall coerce thee, though the devil himself
Fled howling from thy grasp, as thou, stern priest,
Wouldst have the world believe.—Dare not to breathe
Another word against the purity
Of this fair saint, thy sovereign's spotless queen.

DUNSTAN.

Then I must tell thee, holy mother Church,
From your affinity in blood, denies
To her the sacred title of a wife.

ELGIVA.

Injurious, daring priest ! our holy rites
Have made us one, and distant far are we,
Though of one house, in blood.—What ! wouldst thou
cast

Reproach upon my honour, and thy king
Blacken with infamy ?—Shame on thee light !
Thou dost disgrace the mitre on thy brows.

EDWIN.

Be calm, sweet love ! his spirit shall be curbed.
What, shall a churchman dare to brave his prince ?
Urge me no more, lest I forget myself.

DUNSTAN.

Thou hast forgot thyself, vain, wanton youth,
To idle here !—List to those angry sounds
That issue from yon hall, like the dark sea,
Ere in full wrath he thunders round his shores,
And wrecks a nation's pride ! They are the voices
Of all the illustrious warriors in the land,

Calling on him they crowned this day to mount
That regal seat his great forefathers filled,
And cheer them with the welcome of his smiles.

ELGIVA.

'Tis the king's will to tarry here, and who
Shall dare command him hence?

DUNSTAN.

I dare command him !

As minister of the great King of Kings,
And delegate of all the assembled chiefs,
Heaven's and the nations representative——
God for thy mercy ! what do I behold ?
The crown of England cast upon the ground !

EDWIN.

Yes, and he
Who flung it there will in fit time resume it,
And make thee feel its power.

DUNSTAN.

Heaven send me patience !

This is the crown which thy forefathers sought
Through seas, and storms, and rivers shed of blood
On this wave-guarded isle ! The crown which he,
Lord of a hundred battles, Cerdic, tore
From Britain's native kings ! the diadem
Which bound great Egbert's brows ; which Alfred wore,
Whose fame shall live in England's brightest story
Long as she bears a name ; which he preserved
With his loved country's freedom from the hordes
Of the wild savage northmen, and transmitted,
Circled with tenfold splendours by his deeds,
To Athelstan, renownedly the first
Great monarch of all England !—(24)

EDWIN.

And I'll wear it

As doth become the lineal heir of those
Time-honour'd kings.

DUNSTAN.

No, Edwin, thou hast cast
This ancient symbol of imperial power,
This sacred glory of thy house, away,
To wanton in voluptuous beauty's smile !
Nay, yet resume it, whilst thou hast the power,
And to thy angry chiefs return with me.

EDWIN.

Hence from my presence ! I will not return.

DUNSTAN.

Misguided prince, by holy Peter's head,
I will not hence, till to the banquet-hall
Of warriors I have brought thee.

EDWIN.

Ha ! begone !

On thy allegiance, treasonable intruder,
I charge thee to withdraw.—Shall I, a king,
Monarch of all the Saxons, be debarr'd
A pleasure which the meanest slave enjoys,
To pass an hour in sweet domestic peace ?

DUNSTAN.

Thou, as a prince, dost to thy people owe
Those duties I must now on thee enforce.
It is not treasonable to *crown* a king,
And thus the golden circle on thy brows
A second time I place.—Good bishop, aid
To make this stubborn king his honours wear
As doth become a king.—

(They force the crown on Edwin's head.)

Sure I'm the first
Who forced a crown upon a princely head.

Kings wage eternal warfare for the prize
Which thou takest so reluctant.

ELGIVA.

Insolent !

Thou daringly hast rushed into the presence,
Insulted, and maltreated thy liege lord.
Traitor ! my shrieks shall through the palace ring !
Treason ! ho ! treason !—Guards, protect the king !

DUNSTAN.

Drag him along—on to the hall, I say.

EDWIN—(*struggling.*)

Off, ye vile slaves ! my vengeance waits you both !

DUNSTAN.

I'll answer for this deed before the nobles.

[*Exeunt Dunstan and the Bishop, dragging off the King.*]

CUTHBERGA.

Alas ! how will this end ?

ELGIVA.

Be not cast down ;—

Edwin, descended from an ancient line
Of mighty kings, will not with tameness brook
An insult so outrageous.—Come what may,
This do I know, while I his smiles enjoy,
I must be greatly happy.—Thrones may fall,
And crowns become as dust, and empires fade
Like a bright dream of glory ; but the mind,
Sublime in virtue, can outlive the wreck
Of all earth's greatness, and be blessed still,
And in a forest cave, if love dwell there,
Find a sweet home of joy.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Saxon Hall in the Episcopal Palace
at Winchester.*

Enter Eric and Gunhilda.

ERIC.

Joy, joy, Gunhilda! here is noble evil
Stirred up among these Saxons! Priesthood wars
With royalty—O, 'twill be like the strife
When thunder-tempests with the ocean wage
Terrific combat, and his mountain surge
Rolls in resounding whirlpools! I shall now
Ride on the storm, like the dark fiend of shipwreck,
And shape it to my vengeance.

GUNHILDA.

Joy, indeed!

Where is that queller of the devil, Dunstan?

ERIC.

Fled! doomed to banishment, and stripped of all
His honours, wealth, and titles; and the king
Hath sent to seize on both his monasteries
Of Abingdon and ancient Glastonbury,
Resolved to turn out all those shaven crowns,
The lazy Benedictines.

GUNHILDA.

Let them starve

And rot upon a dunghill! would the plague
Consumed the hypocrites and their abettors!

Could I have had my will, I would have poisoned
The banquet-cups of yesterday's proud feast,
That king, and earl, and thane, and bishop all,
With one fierce yell of madness might have died, (25)
And the deep wail of England for her nobles
Have rung from shore to shore ! But what says Odo ?

ERIC.

He loud in wrath vents curses on the king,
And vows to be revenged for this disgrace
Brought on his canting order.

GUNHILDA.

Ah, but is

The bishop's party strong ?

ERIC.

England's chief leaders
Are on his side ; and of the churchmen, few
Will dare oppose the primate.

GUNHILDA.

What's his design ?

ERIC.

I know not yet—but, be it what it may,
Eric, the axe of blood, will hew his way
To vengeance on the house of Athelstan !
Rogvalder, thou hast yet to learn, is cast
Into a dungeon, for a rash attempt
To stab the queen : he failed—but I, no doubt,
Shall in the approaching tumult soon release him.

GUNHILDA.

I trust the rashness of that daring chief
Will not defeat our purpose.

ERIC.

Do not fear—
The tempest swiftly gathers which will burst

On Edwin's head.—Dark hints, by Odo whispered,
Give hopes of a rebellion near at hand,
That will uncrown this late crowned heir of Alfred.

GUNHILDA.

Uncrown him ! that would poorly gratify
The vengeance-passion which consumes our hearts,
As flames enshroud a martyr !

ERIC.

We shall quench
Those deadly fires, ere long, in blood, Gunhilda,
Or greatly perish !—O, to me time lags,
And life grows insupportable, till comes
The hour that on its death-wing brings the last
Fierce struggle for revenge !

GUNHILDA.

Could I but see
Rogvalder's deadly war-knife to the hilt
Red with Elgiva's blood, and hear the king,
Who loves her with a measureless excess,
Howl out his grief in madness o'er her corse,
That would indeed be triumph ! a refinement
On great revenge, which nothing could outgo !

ERIC.

Gunhilda, thou dost merit a high place
In Odin's halls of glory, there to fill
The vanquished foeman's wine-skull for the brave. (26)

GUNHILDA.

Thou canst not wonder, Eric, that this bosom
Has long shut out all softness of my sex.
I who reigned twice a queen,—to whom was paid
The homage of a thousand noble slaves :
One smile of mine—for beauty thou wilt own
Once mantled o'er this cheek her rosy bloom—

Was valour's proudest guerdon ; pomp and state
Showered splendour on my path, and admiration
Still poured her flattering witchery in my ear.

ERIC.

Thou hadst a claim to all the gods could give.

GUNHILDA.

I thank them not ! since they resumed their gifts.
Thrones, empires vanished, and with thee I roamed
A wretched, outcast plunderer of the woods.
For regal robes, decked with refulgent gems,
Rags were my covering, and the blighted rose
Of beauty withered on my cheek beneath
The bitter, biting blast. Those whom thy arm
Struck to the earth, I stript, and gave their limbs
To the cloud-piercing eagle and the wolf.—
I lured the Saxon to our cave of death,
That thou might'st there despatch him, till I grew
With scenes of blood familiar !—Saxons, ye
Have made me what I am !——

ERIC.

Retire—for lo,

The stern precursor of our vengeance comes.
It is the archbishop.

GUNHILDA.

O, I hate to look

On power and grandeur, now no longer mine,
And would have all be wretched as myself.

[*Exit.*

Enter Odo.

ODO.

'Tis not to be endured——A mitred abbot
Degraded, banished !—and now messengers
Sent after to deprive him of his sight

If found on English shores!—A spotless saint!
Who vanquished Beelzebub, the prince of darkness!—
Abolish, too, my new, heaven-founded order,
And crush our grand reform i' th' very bud,
And all to gratify a wanton woman!—
A sword! a sword! St. Benedict, to purge
The guilty court of its abominations!—
Harold!

ERIC.

My sacred lord, I wait your will.

ODO.

Thou art my knight; a stout, bold, powerful soldier,
Fit to command a host in battle-hour.
Since thou hast been with me, I still have found thee
Faithful and diligent.

ERIC.

My readiness
Goes ever with your bidding.

ODO.

It is well.

Thou know'st this kingly boy, on whose weak brows
So late we set the crown, hath dared to lift
His arm against the church, and deeply wound
In all his honours one of her holiest sons.
The church must not be trampled on—no, not
By any crowned head in Christendom.
Few are the guards that now attend the king;—
At midnight to his palace thou shalt lead
All my retainers—a brave, goodly band,
In war-feats well accomplished.—Ha, I see
The lightning gushing from thine eye's dark orb,
Alive with martial fire!—O, thou dost feel

A right good ardour to avenge the wrongs
Done to the sacred priesthood !

ERIC.

Curses on thee,
Thou shaven-pated dotard !—No, I feel
A tumult of fierce joy rush to my heart,
That now at last the wished-for hour is near,
And pant to avenge myself ! (*Aside.*)—Shall I my sword
Strike to the heart of Edwin ?

ODO.

No !—

ERIC.

What then ?

ODO.

Tear from his arms that base and shameless woman
He calls his queen, and drag the wanton here.—
They shall be parted !—In the judgment hall,
Before the chiefs, by virtue of that power
With which the church hath vested me, will I
Pronounce divorcement on their marriage, and
Brand her fair forehead with the name of WHORE !
Then banish her the realm !—

ERIC.

Ha, ha, ha, ha !

ODO.

What means that fiend-like laugh ?—Think'st thou I lack
The power to punish kings who dare rebel
Against heaven's ministers ?—Or is it joy
To learn that power is mine ?

ERIC.

Yes ! joy, joy, joy !
Delirious joy, good bishop !—Transports rush
Like quivering lightnings through my frame ! I burn

With eager exultation!—Revenge! revenge!
O, thou art come at last to allay those flames
That feed upon my vitals! and all bright
And gloriously triumphant is thy coming!
Thanks, thanks, most noble bishop!—Let me kneel
And press my burning lips upon thy hand!

ODO.

What cause hast thou for this wild savage joy?—
Has Edwin injured thee?

ERIC.

Injured me!—ha, ha, ha!—

O, that I had the ocean's mighty voice,
When in his wrath he on the foam-clad rocks
Dashes the shrieking mast-boy, then would I
Shout my fierce joy to Norway's farthest shore!

ODO.

Who art thou?

ERIC.

Your poor slave, my gracious lord,
Eagerly anxious to perform your will.—
I must subdue this madness of revenge,
Which rolls its tide of pleasure on my soul. (*Aside.*)

ODO.

No matter who thou art—I see I've chosen
A fitting instrument for my designs.

ERIC.

The world could not have found thee such another!

ODO.

'Tis well.—Prepare my soldiers for their duty.

ERIC.

I fly, my lord!—Not the gaunt forest wolf,
With hunger howling, on his victim springs
So joyously, as I now haste to bring

This queen within the power of yonder saint.
What, ho ! Gunhilda ! ho !

[*Exit.*

ODO.

Kings may command lay subjects, but the church
Shall govern kings.—I will avenge my friend !
The church has in his person been insulted.
Look to thy crown—it totters on thy head,
Lascivious prince !—He who the diadem
Placed on thy brows, may yet those brows uncrown !

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Hall in the Palace of the King.*

Enter Rodomond and Guthlac.

RODOMOND.

O, Guthlac, how provoking ! that his highness
Should quit the hall of thanes just as I took
The harp to sing my coronation ode !
And then, when Dunstan dragged him back again,
All was confusion, sullenness, and discord.

GUTHLAC.

Beshrew my harp-strings, if I do not think
Those noisy guests of Edwin's wine-hall lost
That which had gained their wonder.

RODOMOND.

Wonder, Guthlac !

Their admiration ! their unbounded plaudits !
If its astounding language had not quite
O'erpowered their faculties of speech and reason !
Such melody !—and then such metaphors !—
'Tis spangled with them like a peacock's tail,
When all its gorgeousness is spread i' th' sun !

GUTHLAC.

Thy heavy genius has the peacock's pride,
Without one feather of his brilliant plumage. (*Aside.*)

RODOMOND.

Wouldst thou believe it?—I have called the king
By twenty epithets in one short verse!—
The illustrious prince! the unicorn of war!—

GUTHLAC.

That is a horned figure.

RODOMOND.

True, but then
An ancient symbol of great strength and power.—
Splitter of shields!—Cracker of double pates!—
There is a figure! meaning head and helm.
The dragon of renown!—

GUTHLAC.

Who never yet
A single battle fought.

RODOMOND.

But then he will—
That's the same thing.—The very pouch of bounty!
Sun of his people!—

GUTHLAC.

Should it not be rather
The father of his people?

RODOMOND.

O, how dull!—
I mean the light of England, as the sun
Is the great light of heaven.—Mark, Guthlac, mark
This grand comparison—England's stout cudgel,
That well belabours all her hostile foes!—
Is not that fine?—for England would be nothing
Without her oaken staff of royalty.—

And then the queen—O, I have not forgot
Our gracious queen—her eyes of moony blue !—
That is, of course, eyes like the radiant moon.

GUTHLAC.

But then the moon's not blue——

RODOMOND.

Pshaw !—thou a poet !

Bards should compose what none can comprehend,
Save those of our high calling.—Thou dost mar,
With thy ill-timed, impertinent remarks,
The cadence of my lay.—The queen—a star !
That sheds on England virtue's sweetest moonlight !——

GUTHLAC.

A star shed moonlight—that's a glaring figure !—

RODOMOND.

No, no—not moonlight ;—sunlight !

GUTHLAC.

That's more glaring still !

RODOMOND.

So much the better.—

Figures and tropes are nothing if not bold.
But where did I leave off ?—O ay, the queen—
The very apple-tree of beauty, flushed
With all its spring bloom !—Britain's full-blown sun-
flower,
From which the needy, like a swarm of bees,
Gather the honey-dews of charity :—
There is a touch of the sublime and grand,
Worth all the relics of St. Alban's shrine !

GUTHLAC.

Sublime indeed !

RODOMOND.

Ay, think'st thou not, my friend,

I shall be handed down to distant ages
A most surprising monument of genius?

GUTHLAC.

No doubt you will, for you have not an equal
In your high-soaring fancy's rich conceits.

RODOMOND.

With all due modesty, I think thou'rt right.

GUTHLAC.

Why future generations sure will build
A lofty pillar or temple to the fame
Of Rodomond, the prince of Saxon Scalds.

RODOMOND.

That, Guthlac, is already done ;—my works
On every subject which the pen can touch,
Voluminous and vast, richly inscribed
With gold and curious paintings, are laid up
In the monastic libraries.—These for me
A giant pile have reared, which shall outlive
The wreck of marble monuments and towers,
And lift its head, proud in immortal youth,
When this great palace is a heap of dust,
Claiming the admiration of the world !

GUTHLAC.

O, thou dost merit all the world will give
To thy surprising genius—which will be
Oblivion and neglect, world without end. (*Aside.*)

RODOMOND.

Ah, Guthlac ! what do gifted bards like us,
Who feel the glow of inspiration scorch
Our souls up to a cinder, not endure,
To charm mankind, and win the glorious steep,
Where we are loaded with eternal wreaths,
That wave and rustle in the breath of fame,

Like a huge oak-tree, shook by summer gales !
O, we are martyrs to our sun-fire thoughts,
And waste like wax amid the flames of genius !

GUTHLAC.

And then expire in cold and sparkless ashes.

RODOMOND.

Sparkless !

A thousand future bards will stir my ashes
To warm themselves, and light their smoky fires.
But O, those wretches ! who, when we our harps
Strike in the hall, pretend to mete our powers,
And growl, like snappish curs, their censures forth,
Without or mind to judge, or heart to feel—
They are a misbegotten, mongrel crew,
The snarling breed of prejudice and ignorance,
The curse of genius and the land's disgrace !

GUTHLAC.

And can such buzzing insects of a day
Annoy you with their stings ?

RODOMOND.

No, Guthlac, no :

They have my deepest scorn.—Such wasps can ne'er
Give pain to him who, in the radiant mail
Of Genius clad, shines through those envious clouds
That hover round him, like the morning sun
Piercing the reeky fogs o' the rotten fen.

Enter Edwin and Earl Oswald.

EDWIN.

What ! has the haughty monk escaped my vengeance ?

OSWALD.

Yes, good my liege ; ere I could reach the coast

He had embarked, and was far out at sea,
Before a favouring gale.

EDWIN.

'Tis well for him

He made good speed to quit the shores of England.
O, 'tis not to be borne that I, a king,
Should by that priest be braved in my own chamber ;
Insulted with rude taunts, and basely dragged
Before my nobles, like a robber-slave !
Anger and shame still burn upon my cheek.

OSWALD.

For his bold insolence he merits death.

EDWIN.

No, my loved friend, not death ;—our Saxon laws
Award not death to any, save the free
Who take the robber's craft ; and I would not (27)
Trespass upon their mildness—I'd not have
The blood of any of my subjects shed.
A king should punish with a father's love.—
O, Rodomond, to thee I owe the life
Of my Elgiva—how can I reward thee ?

RODOMOND.

My glorious prince, by listening to the ode
Which I have on your coronation penned,
And which that meddling knave of Glastonbury
Prevented being chanted in the hall.
It merits well a hearing from your highness,
For O, my gracious lord, 'tis such an ode !—

EDWIN.

To-morrow in the great wine-chamber we
Again hold state, with our beloved queen.
There will we listen gladly to thy harp,
And think meanwhile what I can do to serve thee.

RODOMOND.

Thanks to the saints !—Ye lagging, weary hours,
Speed swiftly on—to-morrow will the crown,
Th' unfading crown of poesy, be mine !
My ode ! my ode ! will now be heard, in spite
Of all the abbots and bishops in the kingdom !
[*Exeunt Rodomond and Guthlac.*]

Enter Elgiva.

ELGIVA.

My gracious lord—

EDWIN.

O, thou art doubly dear,
My sweet Elgiva, now I know thy life
Has been endangered by a ruffian's fury.
What now would be my grief, my wild despair,
Hadst thou been by his murderous poniard struck !

ELGIVA.

O, think of that no more ;—our dangers past
Should only make our present joys more bright.
Th' insulter of thy majesty is fled,
And he who aimed a death-blow at my heart
Lies in his dungeon-chains.—Then from thy brow
Banish that cloud, and let gay, sunny fancies
Play in thy smile, and light thy heaven-blue eye
With splendours from the radiant source of joy.
Art thou not happy ?

EDWIN.

Yes, that thou dost live,
And I can hold thee in these arms of love.
My gentle wife, more soft and beautiful
Than visions of young Genius, when he dreams

Of lovely forms i' the bowers of paradise ;
While o'er thee innocence and goodness fling
Their own enchanting brightness ! In thee centres
All I can wish for, save my people's love. (28)

ELGIVA.

And thine shall be their love, their fervent homage ;
For we will study how to make them happy.
All shall be cherished by us as our children,
And thou adored, as the indulgent father
Of one great family, whose joyous hearts
Shall pour a thousand blessings on their king ;
While prayers from every corner of the land
For him ascend to heaven.

EDWIN.

My noble queen !
Good Oswald, does she not deserve the hearts
Of all our subjects ?

OSWALD.

Hers and yours they are ;—
Such virtues as ye both inherit add
Refulgence to the glory of a throne,
Nor borrow aught from greatness.—While she lives,
And you, my liege, shall reign, England will be
Far, far beyond all other nations blessed.
(*Flourish of horns.*)

EDWIN.

What mean those martial sounds at this late hour ?

Enter Eric in armour, followed by Soldiers.

ERIC.

(*Advancing, and seizing the Queen.*) Lady, you must
with me !

EDWIN.

With thee, base slave !
Unhand her—or my sword shall in thy blood
Be to the pommel bathed !

ERIC.

Weak boy ! tempt not
The sinewy power of this strong arm of war,
That in a thousand battles has struck down
The proudest men of might.

EDWIN.

I scorn its power ;
And did the giant strength e'en of a host
Now nerve thy brawny limbs, I'd with thee cope,
And perish, or release my insulted queen !

OSWALD.

And I will aid thee, though he fight beneath
Some master-spell of hag-wrought witchery.

*(Edwin and Oswald rush on Eric, who strikes their
swords at one blow in pieces.)*

EDWIN.

Treason ! what ho ! my guards !

ERIC.

Thy guards are all
My prisoners—and a prisoner shalt thou be
Within thy palace, till this woman here
Has heard her doom pronounced.

ELGIVA.

My doom !
All-gracious Heaven ! what doom, dark, stern-eyed
chief ?

EDWIN.

Who art thou, fierce, mysterious man of scorn,
That thus thou darest with armed bands to enter

My palace gates at midnight's peaceful hour,
Seize on my queen, and make thy king a captive?

ERIC.

My king ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! No king art thou o'er me—
Fair, smooth-faced, love-sick boy, thou art my scorn !
A thing—made for a woman's toy—her minion !
Go, gaze upon thy beauty in a glass,
And worship thy sweet form—but dare not think
I own thee, or the loftiest man on earth,
My sovereign !—Rule thou o'er thy cringing slaves,
The weeds that creep beneath thy sapling shade ;
But think not o'er the giant oak to reign,
That towers above the forest.—Who I am
Thou, Edwin, soon shalt to thy sorrow learn.
Come, thou must hence with me !

(Seizing the arm of the Queen.)

ELGIVA.

With thee, thou dreadful, savage, frowning being !
Who, like a demon from the gulfs of hell,
Hast in thy darkness risen to destroy
All happiness, all hope !

(Breaks from him, and rushes to Edwin.)

O, my sweet lord !

I cannot, will not part from thee, to go
I know not where, with this terrific fiend !

ERIC.

Resistance is in vain. *(Again seizing her arm.)*

ELGIVA.

Off, monster ! off !

If thou wilt murder me, here let me die ;
Here, in the faithful arms of my loved husband.

ERIC.

Tear them asunder ! *(To the Soldiers, who seize the King.)*

ELGIVA.

(*Shrieking.*) Ha, save me ! save me !
My lord, my king, let me not lose thy hold—
O, dreadful ! dreadful !—
By ruffian fiends to be at midnight hour
Dragged forth to death—or worse, perhaps, than death,
To horrible pollution !—O, the flames
Of madness flash around my burning brain
At such a thought !

EDWIN.

What can I do to save thee ?

ERIC.

Die !

EDWIN.

Ay, freely—take, here take my life for hers.

ERIC.

Thy doom is not yet come ;—no, live and languish
In those keen agonies which for her fate
Thy heart will suffer—till I bid thee die !

ELGIVA.

Nay, have compassion, have some little mercy (*Kneeling*)
On my despair, if in thine iron heart
One spark of human feeling has a place—

ERIC.

Not one for thee !

ELGIVA.

Remorseless chief !—yet, yet,
I do implore thee, some brief mercy show—
O, spare me but to-night !

ERIC.

No, not if all

Thy saints knelt to entreat me by thy side.
No further wailing—Come, thy fate is fixed !

ELGIVA.

Farewell, my dearest Edwin !—O, I feel
The murderous knife already in my bosom,
Sundering the heart-cords ! See, the blood-streams gush
Forth from the gaping wound ! O——Edwin ! Edwin !

*(Faints in the arms of Eric as he tears her from
Edwin, and bears her off.)*

ERIC.

Guard you the king. *(To the Soldiers.)*

This is the second triumph of revenge ! [*Exeunt.*

EDWIN.

God, for thy mercy save me ! do I dream ?
Can this be real, or some horrid vision,
That strikes upon my brain like molten lead !

OSWALD.

I cannot utter what my spirit feels,
That burns with ardour to avenge thy wrongs.

EDWIN.

O, I was late the happiest in my realms,
Rich in the love of her who was my world
Of blessedness——Now from these doting arms
Have hell-dogs torn her ! and while here I stand,
Powerless to save or rescue, her sweet form,
In all its angel beauty, is given up
To ruffian violence !—Hurl your red bolts,
Avenging fires, and blast them with destruction !
Ah, brutal fiends ! I see your gleaming knives !
I hear her death-shrieks on the midnight winds,
Her last blood-stifled groan ! Despair and madness !

*(Edwin falls, Oswald kneels mournfully over him,
and the Soldiers form a picturesque group
around them.)*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Judgment-hall in the Episcopal Palace; at the upper end a Tribunal, with a Chair of State, in which Odo appears seated. The Hall is crowded with Chiefs, Officers, and Soldiers.*

ODO.

CHIEFTAINS of England, now assembled here,
Around our judgment-seat, ye know that Edwin
To mitres and to lands hath barred the right
Of Dunstan, that meek, pious, holy saint,
And banished him the kingdom, for performing
His duty and your wishes—Ye are bound,
I tell you, by the laws of God and man,
To do him justice, and support his cause
Against a wicked tyrant, who hath wronged
A heaven-illumined pillar of the church,
To indulge his lewd desires, and gratify
The vengeance of a base, ambitious harlot,
Who in her wantonness hath urged him on,
Like Jezebel of old, to slay God's priests,
And bring the wrath of heaven upon our land. (29)
From this tribunal we shall now pronounce
On her the righteous judgment of the church.
Let her be brought before us.—

Enter Elgiva, led by Eric, and followed by Guards.

We have sent,

Woman of guilt, by virtue of our office,
As heaven's vicegerent o'er the Saxon church,
Her guard from all impurity and vice,
To take thee from the king, with whom thou livest
In foul adultery, to the great disgrace
And glaring scandal of the English court.

ELGIVA.

'Tis false, injurious priest !

ODO.

Woman, beware
How thou insult'st the minister of heaven,
Or on thy head the church's awful ban
Will from this dread tribunal be pronounced.

ELGIVA.

Yes, thou may'st launch the thunder of thy curse
On my devoted head, but innocence
And virtue will enshield me—The bright saints
Are witness to the purity which rules
My thoughts and actions, and heaven will return
That curse on him whose lips shall dare pronounce it !

ODO.

Dare ! haughty strumpet !——

ELGIVA.

Peace, thou insolent !

I am a wife, a queen, and should command
Decent respect from thee, the least which thou
Couldst to a woman pay.—I will not stand
Tamely and hear such hell-black infamy
Cast on my stainless virtue.—Ill doth it
Become thy reverend years and priestly function,
Thy sacred pall, thy seat, and lofty state,
To use such vile opprobrious terms of speech,
Which would, my lord, disgrace thy meanest slave.

I am, alas! 'tis true,
A poor, weak, helpless woman, in your power,
Dragged hither by that ruffian and his band;
Yet here I boldly stand before you all,
Fearless in conscious virtue!—Here I stand,
Your sovereign's wedded wife, and dare defy
The malice of my bitterest foes to cast
A shade of guilt on my unsullied honour.

ODO.

Pernicious woman! thou art not the wife
Of England's sovereign;—for allied are ye
By blood, within prohibited degrees;
Therefore our holy statutes do forbid
A union so disgraceful; deeming it—
Mark, thanes and chieftains, mark—concubinage!

ELGIVA.

Where slept this law till now, thou stern-browed judge?
Why was it not proclaimed when, at the altar,
With holy vow and solemn rite, I gave
My virgin hand in marriage to the king,
And the good bishop blessed us as we knelt
Before our Lady's shrine?—This is a trick
To blacken me i' th' opinion of the world,
And render Edwin odious to his subjects;—
'Tis crafty, deep revenge!—

ODO.

I will not hear
Such language uttered from thy guilty lips,
Thou Jezebel! Thy tongue is fraught with malice;—
Hear thou, in silence, that decree which shall
Go forth against thee:—By the authority
Of canon law, vested in me, I now,
Our sometime queen, pronounce thy marriage void!

It is annulled, and thou art from the king
Divorced for ever !

ELGIVA.

O, no, no, no !

Eternal mercy ! not divorced for ever !
Say not for ever, stern, unfeeling judge !—
Thou canst not sunder those whom Heaven has joined
In holy wedlock.—

ODO.

Woman, it is done !—

The solemn doom is from my lips gone forth,
Which nothing can revoke ; and, for thy penance,
Thou shalt be banished to a distant isle,
Nor ever tread again on England's shores !

ELGIVA.

Ha ! then the bolts of your terrific vengeance
Are fallen, indeed, upon me ! they have pierced
Through my distracted heart ! Shall I no more
Behold my Edwin, my loved, wedded lord ?—

ODO.

No, never !—

ELGIVA.

Cruel, cruel !—Grant me one,
One little boon—I beg it on my knees—
O, let me see him but for one short moment—
Let me, if thou hast any mercy left,
That I may take a last, a sad farewell,
Ere, broken-hearted, I from hence depart.

Cuthberga rushes wildly in.

CUTHBERGA.

Where is my child ? I will behold my child,

Or make your palace echo with my shrieks !

(Rushes into the arms of Elgiva.)

ELGIVA.

Ah ! what, my mother here ! the dreadful storm
Thou dread'st is fallen, indeed, upon my head !
Yon ruthless judge hath from my husband's arms
Divorced me, and for ever !—I am doomed
In banishment to wander far from home,
And find an exile's grave !

CUTHBERGA.

Divorced ! and banished !
'Thou, Edwin's wedded wife ! the queen of England ?
Banished !—for what ?—

ODO.

Silence thy brawling tongue !
And thou, fair harlot, hear thy further doom—
We do decree,
That for thy wanton deeds, and those vile arts,
Given wholly to the devil ! by which thou'st caused (30)
A cruel persecution to be raised
Against that humble saint, the holy Dunstan,
A martyr to thy lewdness,—thou shalt now,
On that fair forehead, with a burning iron,
Be branded with the infamous name of WHORE !

(Elgiva shrieks, and falls on the ground.)

That in thine exile, wheresoe'er thou wand'rest,
The good may scorn and shun thee !

CUTHBERGA.

O, my lord,
Thus on my knees imploringly I sue
To thee for mercy on my guiltless child !
Spare, spare the iron's burning infamy.

O, have compassion on a mother's tears,—
I will for her all penances perform,
The most severe that woman can endure,
To absolve her from your sentence! I will lay
Aside these robes, and mourn in dust and sackcloth;
Barefooted I on pilgrimage will walk,
And make the flints my bed, my canopy
The stormy clouds of night, nor taste of food,
Save bread and water, till, my strength o'erpowered,
I at the threshold of some shrine expire! (31)

ODO.

Away! thou art the abettor of her shame,
And shalt on bread and water in a cell
Be kept for life!—Prepare the irons there!—
Take up the wanton, bear her to yon chamber,
And execute her sentence!

CUTHBERGA.

Must I plead
In vain for mercy, stern and ruthless judge?
Thou hast no wife, no children; ne'er hast known
A parent's boundless love, a parent's anguish,
Or thou wouldst have some little pity on me.
O, there are not on earth such tender ties
As those which bind a mother to her child!
'Tis for an only daughter now I plead,—
Show her some mercy for the love of heaven!

ODO.

None!—for I am the foe inflexible (32)
To vice and crime!—Part them, and lead them off!

ELGIVA.

O mother, mother!—

(Reviving, and rushing into Cuthberga's arms.)

Must I, too, be torn

P

From thee for ever?—Must I never feel
Thy fond embrace, nor look upon thee more?—
My heart is breaking!—O, my dearest mother,
How can I say to thee, Farewell for ever?—
Where, where art thou, my Edwin?—ah, alas!
Thou canst not save me from these fiend-like men!

CUTHBERGA.

Our tears and agonies move not their pity;—
Would I could die for thee, my guiltless child!

ELGIVA.

That I am guiltless Heaven will witness for me,
When yonder judge shall be himself adjudged
Before its awful bar!

ODO.

Bear them away!

ELGIVA.

Remorseless priest! O give me but a moment
To gaze for the last time upon a mother,
A tender mother, I shall see no more!—
But we shall meet ere long in brighter worlds,
Where none shall part us!—See, they come to stamp,
In burning characters, upon my brow,
That horrid mark of shame; and I, though guiltless,
Must bear it, as I wander through the world
Like the first homicide! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*(Sinks into the arms of some of the soldiers, as they
approach her, and is borne off.)*

CUTHBERGA.

My child! my child!

Thou truculent wolf, clad in a shepherd's garb,
A mother's curses on thy death-bed light!

(Cuthberga is borne off on the opposite side.)

ODO.

Base woman !—but thy maledictions fall
Like storm-winds on the everlasting rock.
Chieftains ! I, as the minister of Heaven,
Have done my duty ;—'tis your part to act
With equal vigour, and compel the king
T' restore our holy abbot to his rights—
That angel, sent by Heaven t' reform the church,
To turn out those voluptuous sons of sloth,
The clergy, who regard alone the fleece,
And give their wealth to holy men like us.

CHIEFS.

Dunstan shall be recalled !—A saint ! a saint !

ODO.

Enough, my friends !—Retire each to his place.
A sacred benediction rest on all !

(The Chiefs retire, bowing very low to the Archbishop.)

Harold, thou hast performed thy office well,
And well shalt be rewarded.—Now, young king,
I've swept the court of thy impurities ;
If thou resist, I will stir up the north,
Where I have potent friends—Prince Edgar stands
Near to thy throne—Beware !—He who shall make
That child a sovereign, will himself be king. [Exit.

ERIC.

The north !——

The north should be *my* kingdom—Have *I* there
No friends among that Scandinavian race ?—
Are there no hopes for me, that I, amid
These storms of state, may shape myself a way
Once more to kingly power ?—Hope dawns upon me—
A glimmering radiance in the horizon breaks !—
I stand like a proud mountain, on whose heights

The rosy beams of morning shed their light,
While all beneath is darkness and repose !

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Hall in the Royal Palace.*

Enter Rodomond and Guthlac.

RODOMOND.

Here is a forest of rank treason, sprung
Up from our English soil o'er half the land !—
Reared by the devil's magic in one night,
Bearing the fruits of death, and dropping dews
Of blood and poison on us !—O, for an axe
To clear it by the roots !

GUTHLAC.

Ay, but I fear

'Tis of too vast a growth.

RODOMOND.

Or some fierce tempest,
Raised by grim witches, that would level it (33)
With one tremendous swoop, wide room to make
For the true kingly oak of royalty
To spread its branches over all the land,
That every Englishman beneath its shade
Might sit in fearless peace.—The beauteous queen—
The rose of glory banished from the kingdom !
Branded with infamy !

GUTHLAC.

Ay, king and people
Are governed by the sword-law of a priest.

RODOMOND.

Destruction fasten on all priestly tyrants,
And sweep oppression in its every form

Clean from this suffering and long-wearied world !
But my grand ode—O, Guthlac, Guthlac !
My coronation ode will never now
Transport the queen's glad ear !—O what a loss
Has she sustained !—Her miseries had been soothed
Could she have in her exile with her borne
Some memory of my sweet enchanting strains !
I do not think that Odin's magic song,
Said to have raised the dead, might be compared
With that sublime effusion !

GUTHLAC.

O, good lord !
Was ever vanity before like thine ! (*Aside.*)

RODOMOND.

Branded !—That brow of lilies, round which bloomed
The violet flowers of modesty !—Why she
The very golden necklace wore of virtue,
Decked with the jewels of benevolence,
And graciousness to all was in her smile.—
The devil take that cope-crowned monk, say I !

GUTHLAC.

Thou utterest sacrilegious treason, friend !

RODOMOND.

Why tyranny, that ghastly monster, stalks
Through all the land, in the white garments clad
Of priestly sanctity, and monkish cowl,
Making the king a slave !—O, I could weep
Myself into a river, broad and long
As Avon or the Severn, for the queen,
Right well contented to be such a stream,
Could I but drown the archbishop in my waves.

Enter Edwin and Earl Oswald.

EDWIN.

And is it possible that my loved queen,
My wedded wife, is banished from my realms—
Branded upon her fair and virtuous brows
With burning irons !—O, it maddens me !
My very blood seems turned to veins of fire,
Which thrill, with hopes of vengeance, through my
frame,
Till horror at Elgiva's wrongs and sufferings
Congeal to ice those life-streams !

RODOMOND.

Would I were fire !
I'd burn the bishop's palace and himself
To ashes, long ere night !

EDWIN.

O, I am now
The shadow of a king !—Winter has rushed
Upon my early leaves !—Obedience, power,
Honour, and state fall off, and leave me naked ;
While those who sought the shadow of my boughs,
When in my verdant freshness I o'ertopped
The lofty forest, fly before the blasts
Of treason, which through my weak branches howl,
And threaten to uprear me by the roots.

OSWALD.

All will not leave thee—Wessex and her chiefs
Are eager to behold thy banners wave,
And shout revenge !—Then yield not to despair,
Though Mercia and Northumberland conspire
With rebels to dethrone their lawful prince.

EDWIN.

Dethrone me !—Will they dare ?—But what to me
Are thrones and empires without her I love,
By ruffians from me torn !

RODOMOND.

True, good my liege,
And, woeful to narrate, she has not heard
My coronation ode !—But you shall have
Ample revenge for these indignities.

EDWIN.

How, how, good Rodomond !

RODOMOND.

I'll write, my lord,
An elegiac-satiric-tragic ode
On the base injuries done to our loved queen,
Which shall so lash those hypocrites, her foes,
That they will hang themselves with sheer vexation,
And which, of this be certain, will transmit
Their infamy down to the latest ages :—
O, that will be revenge worthy a king !

Enter Odo.

EDWIN.

Ha ! hoary traitor, how darest thou appear
In my insulted presence ?

ODO.

Dare, young prince !—
I, who, as Heaven's high delegate, have cleansed
The libidinous court of sin, and punished crime,
Dare come before thee, or the loftiest head
That wears a diadem.

RODOMOND—(*aside*).

Ay, he is one
Of those who dare the very devil himself
To mortal combat ! but if he survive
The shafts of my keen satire, he must be
More than a match for all the devils that fly !

[*Exeunt Rodomond and Guthlac.*]

ODO.

Nay, thou weak, wanton boy, I come to claim
Thy thanks for what I 've done.

EDWIN.

My thanks ! my curses,
Thou proud insulter !—

ODO.

Prince, beware ! curse not
The minister of holiness, to whom
The awful power to curse or bless is given,
Or on thy head will tenfold be returned
Thy maledictions !

EDWIN.

Thou hast from me torn
A gentle wife, so beautiful, so good,
So virtuous, that no speck or stain could mar
Her sun-bright honour—yet hast thou, stern man,
Unfeeling as the forest-savage, marked
Her brow with infamy's detested brand,
And banished her like a base criminal !
Away ! I cannot bear to look upon thee !
Thou hast the ruthless spirit of a fiend ! (34)
My heart, Elgiva, for thy sufferings weeps
Blood drops !—but thou shalt be revenged !

ODO.

Weep for

Thy sins, young king, for they must be atoned
By penance, fasts, and tears.—If thou wouldst have
The holy rites of church, wouldst keep thy crown,
Recall good Dunstan from his banishment.
Northumberland and Mercia are in arms ;
They shout for Dunstan, and demand him home. (35)

EDWIN.

Perish crown, empire, life ! let all float down
Rebellion's crimson tide to swift destruction,
Ere that saint-seeming fiend his foot shall set
Again on England's shores !

ODO.

Then Edgar reigns !

EDWIN.

Ha ! thou foul traitor, hence ! ere I forget
That sacred station which protects thy person.

ODO.

I scorn thy power—Thy foes are Heaven's loved friends.
Thou wouldst prevent the church's reformation,
And for a wanton darest defame a saint :
I do pronounce thee, prince, henceforth accursed !—
Look to it—for no tongue but mine can from
The dread anathema absolve thy soul ! [Exit.

EDWIN.

O, my loved Oswald, was there ever king
So injured, so insulted !

OSWALD.

Rouse to arms !

The Wessex men burn to avenge thy wrongs.

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

My royal lord, the powerful Earl of Mercia,

With the Northumbrian chiefs, are on the borders
Of Wessex, followed by their numerous bands,
Proclaiming Edgar king !

EDWIN.

This is the work
Of that arch-rebel Odo—Haste ! send forth,
And gather men, whose hearts, like mine, are steeled
To noble enterprise—Let the fierce storm
In all its dark magnificence roll on ;
I will not quail to meet it. Heaven is witness,
I scorn the wish to trample on the rights
And freedom of my people ; but as one
Of England's sons, I will my own just claims,
Bravely defend or perish.—From thy scabbard,
Sword of my fathers, leap ! protect my crown,
My loved home-joys, from violence and rapine,
And for a deeply-injured wife reap thou
A harvest of revenge !—He merits not
The name of man who, in a cause so sacred,
Would not his heart's last life-drop freely shed ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Forest : at the back part of the stage
an entrance to a Cavern.*

*A group of Robbers, some lying on the ground, others
carelessly leaning against the trees.*

FIRST ROBBER.

Share me no plunder when the fight is won,
If I am not a-wearied of this ease :
Sloth has its tiresomeness as well as toil.

SECOND ROBBER.

Would not the distant music of some band

Of gleemen, Cuthbert, and their merry jugglers,
Returning from the hall of lordly thane, (36)
Rich with his gifts, delight thee?—We would soon
Ease them of all they by their glee-games won.

FIRST ROBBER.

Ay, Hubert, or the sight of passing mass-thane,
Mounted upon his steed, with jewelled trappings, (37)
And cope of gold, and vest embossed with gems,
Journeying with splendid train to distant abbey,
Or on a visit to some giver of loaves. (38)

THIRD ROBBER.

Or it were but a pilgrim band, with offerings
For Alban's or Augustin's holy shrine,
'Twould be relief from this dull idleness
To make them yield their treasures at our altar
Of manly free-craft— (*Horn at a distance.*)

Hark !—I hear the horn
Of brave Redwolfgar, our redoubted chief.
There's something stirring, by its merry tones,
To ease our weary limbs of sluggish dullness,
And call us into action.

FIRST ROBBER.

Any change
Is welcome now—We have not had a bout
With monks or laymen for a tedious time ;
Ours, after all, is but a scurvy craft,
Unless well followed.

Enter Redwolfgar.

REDWOLFGAR.

Up, ye sluggards ! up,
My merry greenwood lads !—Buckle your mail,

Purse-pluckers, rangers of the roguish moon,
Who, laughing bawd to wanton sports and tricks,
Lights us to lords' and misers' heavy bags,
That we, their friends, may ease them of their cares.
Out, and be stirring!—On the forest borders
There is a band of men who have in charge
A lady, bearing her—no matter where—
She is a prize.—Out with your blades of steel,
And show what honour on our manly calling,
My noble hearts of courage, ye confer.

FIRST ROBBER.

We'll soon scour off their rust of slothfulness
With well-aimed blows on buckler and on helm.
Hurrah! my jolly hunters, all the year
Lasteth our 'time of grace' to start the game;
'Tis never out of season, so it comes
Within our scent.—On, my brave sloth-hounds, on!
[*Exeunt* Robbers.]

REDWOLFGAR.

I ween, by their appearance, we shall glean
A sorry booty from the whoreson herd
Of light-armed serving grooms to this fair dame;
But, if I marked her rightly, she is worth
A prince's ransom in her dower of beauty,
Though she in jewels and apparelment
Outvalue not the wealth of a franklin's wife.—
The game's in sight! I hear the wild halloo
Of my fleet-footed rangers, as they onward
Rush merrily to their work. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.—*A rocky Mountain-gorge, covered with forest-trees. A waterfall and torrent: a narrow plank thrown across the cataract from rock to rock. A noise behind, with shrieks and clashing of swords.*

Enter Elgiva, greatly alarmed, in a plain dress, with a scarf bound on her forehead, and her robes disordered. She ascends the rocks towards the bridge.

ELGIVA.

Mercy defend me !

Where shall I fly for safety ? Those who led
Me on to exile, through these frightful woods,
By fell brigands assaulted, all are fled,
Or, weltering in their blood, with death-pangs writhe !
I have escaped, amid the strife of swords,
But am pursued by those wild forest rovers,
And further flight is barred !—Ye saints, look down
In mercy on me !—Ah, a narrow bridge !
Could I but cross it, I might shun their search,
And hide me in some cave or leafy bower.
O, what a fearful height !—A dizziness
Comes o'er me at the sight !—Ha, they are here !

Enter Redwolfgar and three Robbers.

O, blessed Virgin, aid my trembling steps !

REDWOLFGAR.

Follow her quickly, ere she cross the bridge,
Or we, amid the mazes of this forest,
May lose the lovely prize.

Elgiva crosses the bridge with great trepidation; the three Robbers reach it just as she gets on the other

side. As they run across, the bridge breaks, and they all fall into the torrent of the chasm, and are seen no more. Elgiva lifts her hands in thanks to Heaven, and disappears among the rocks.

By hell ! there go
Three of the bravest spirits in my band !
They should have met a nobler death—No matter—
She is a beauteous wench, whom I to gain
Would not regard the loss of half my troop.
I know a way by which to follow her—
I'll call my blood-hound to pursue her track.
Look to the booty there ! and strip the slain. [Exit.

SCENE V.—*Another part of the Forest.*

Enter the former Robbers, with others.

FIRST ROBBER.

What dost thou say ? Is there an army near ?

FOURTH ROBBER.

Yes, on the eastern skirts o' the forest lies
A powerful host of rebels, who proclaim
The brother of young Edwin as their king.
I from some stragglers learnt that in their camp,
Which is well fortified, they mean to wait
Edwin's approach, with all his Wessex men,
When there will be a bloody battle fought.

FIRST ROBBER.

Good tidings for the hunger-bitten wolves
And croaking ravens ; they'll gorge like pampered kings.
Those lordly great ones, who fare daintily,
Will now be food themselves for carrion fowls.

FOURTH ROBBER.

Ay, and good news for us too, jolly comrades.
These civil wars are glorious times for such
As thrive by forage.—Let the blood-red arm
Of insurrection be upraised, and then
Hurrah ! for noble plunder, my brave lads.

FIRST ROBBER.

Then grey-beard justice, on his solemn stool,
Is knocked o' th' mazzard with his own strong lance,
And iron-visaged law skulks like a cur
From the bold lion-face of fearless power.
We from these troubled times will courage pluck,
And quit our forest sanctuary, lads,
To roam at will, and share a golden spoil.

SECOND ROBBER.

We'll trample on the necks of all the great ones,
And turn them out to take the beggar's place,
Whom from their doors they spurned.

THIRD ROBBER.

No, hang them all !

FOURTH ROBBER.

Skin them alive ! that will be glorious sport !
And, stuffed with straw, nail to the gallows-tree
Their skins, to terrify the trembling judge,
And teach the law a retributive lesson,
For having dared to murder honest men
Of our right noble calling.

FIRST ROBBER.

We'll deal out
The laws to those who made them. It is fit
They drink the poison who prepared the draught.
But we must fleece those dead dogs who lie yonder—
I fear they've little to reward the blows

We've taken in this scuffle—then to-night
We'll have a jovial bout, my lads, and drain
The beaker lustily.

SECOND ROBBER.

And make the woods

Ring with our shouts of freedom! liberty!

FOURTH ROBBER.

Slay all who join not with us in the work
Of general plunder!—Crush all rule and power!—

FIRST ROBBER.

Except our own—Down with authority!—
Rob priest and layman!—

SECOND ROBBER.

Pillage!

THIRD ROBBER.

Burn!

FOURTH ROBBER.

Lay waste!

FIRST ROBBER.

Death!

SECOND ROBBER.

Blood!

THIRD ROBBER.

Destruction!—

ALL.

Hurrah! freedom! liberty, and plunder!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*The inside of a Hermit's Cell, or Cave—
an Altar on one side, a Death's-head and Bones, with
an Hour-glass placed on it, under a Crucifix.—The
Stage half dark.*

*Enter Hermit—he stands gazing from the entrance of
the Cavern.*

HERMIT.

Now the soft hour of contemplation reigns—
How sweetly tranquil!—Nature sinks to rest,
O'ercanopied with evening's golden clouds,
While summer's music lulls her to repose.
Nor care, nor woe, nor stormy strife of man
These ancient woods disturb.—Here all is love
And harmony around my forest dwelling.
The gush of streams, where the green alders grow,
The wind's soft whispers to the drowsy flowers,
The blackbird's parting hymn, the stock-dove's voice,
So lovelorn, yet so sweet, all join to shed
A calm and holy feeling on the soul.

ELGIVA—(*without*).

Ho! gentle hermit, ho!

HERMIT.

Who wakes the echoes of these solitudes
With voice so sweetly plaintive?

ELGIVA—(*appearing at the entrance.*)

It is I,

A wandering, wretched, injured, helpless woman,
Who, without friend, or home, or hope, implore
The shelter, holy hermit, of thy cell,
Till morning light returns.

HERMIT.

That may not be.

ELGIVA.

O, by yon blessed cross, and him who died
Upon it for our sins, I do beseech thee,
Let me claim thy protection from a band,
A robber band, of murderers who pursue
My fainting steps—they will not dare profane
This sacred sanctuary with their crimes.

HERMIT.

Thy seeming innocence and beauty plead
Strong in thy behalf, nor to preserve
Thy life can I refuse thee an admittance
Within my rocky cell.—Come, then, and taste
Its humble fare, and peace be to thy fears.

ELGIVA.

Thrice blessed hermit!—but my trembling lips
Refuse to utter what my bosom feels.

*(The Hermit brings forward a table, with fruits, a
pitcher of water, and a lamp burning.)*

HERMIT.

Rest, lady;—here are summer fruits and herbs,
They are a hermit's feast : I'll pour for thee
The limpid freshness of yon gushing rill ;
And, for thy night's repose, there is a bed
Of withered leaves—while I without will watch
And guard thy peaceful slumbers.—Thou dost seem
Wayworn and faint,
And woe-begone is thy fair countenance—
This draught may give relief.—

ELGIVA.

O, holy father,

I am the child of sorrow, and my heart
Is almost broke with misery.

(As Elgiva lifts her hand to take the cup which the Hermit offers her, the scarf falls from her brow, and discovers the characters marked on it—she shrieks, and the Hermit drops the cup, starting with horror.)

HERMIT.

Blessed saints,
Preserve me pure from sin!—what do I see?
A branded malefactress! a false woman,
With her vile wantonness stamp on her brow
In characters of shame!

ELGIVA.

No, no, I am
No wanton—no, by yon bright heaven!
I am not an abandoned, guilty wretch!
Though a vile name is on my forehead stamp
By burning irons.—O, it was a deed
Of dire revenge, by ruthless monsters done,
Who could no pity feel.—O, fly me not,
But hear my tale of misery, and thine eyes
Will weep at the sad story.
(Storm without, continuing to increase.)

HERMIT.

Off! thy touch
Is an accurst pollution!—Thou hast more
Than human beauty in thy witching looks!
I'm spell-bound by thine eye—

ELGIVA.

Is *thy* heart,
Too, against all pity steeled?

HERMIT.

Hark ! what a tempest !

God and the saints be merciful to me !
Thy coming has stirred up the elements
To an unearthly warfare !—I see it now—
It is the Tempter of mankind who hath
Assumed that form of beauty to betray me !—
But heaven has on thy forehead set its mark !
The ban of everlasting wrath be on thee,
Thou evil one !—To conquer, is to fly.

(Rushes off, the storm increases.)

ELGIVA.

O, horrible ! but I deserve it not,—
There is no pity in this world for me.
If long I bear this brand upon my brow,
I shall against the flinty stones my brains
In frenzy dash, and hide the shame in blood !
Hark ! those fell robbers come to tear me hence.

(Noise without.)

Where shall I fly for safety from them now ?

REDWOLFGAR—*(without)*.

Holla ! old hermit, art thou in thy cell ?

ELGIVA—*(shrieking)*.

Ha ! 'tis the voice of their terrific chief !
Ye thunders, rolling through the dreary sky,
Strike with your bolts these rocks, that they may fall,
And bury me beneath a mountain tomb.
O, blessed cross, protect me !

*(Flies, and kneels at the foot of the cross.)**Enter Redwolfgar.*

REDWOLFGAR."

Ha ! at last

I've found thee, fair one, have I? By St. Peter,
'Tis kindly done to soothe the lonely hours
Of a poor hermit.—O, these saintly sons
Of abstinence have still a hankering wish
For a stray beauty—still a little spark
Left in the ashes of their former fires,
Ready to kindle when a soft white hand
Stirs up the dying embers.

ELGIVA.

Blessed Virgin,
Haste on the lightning's crimson wing, and save
Me from this man.

REDWOLFGAR.

A table spread! and cups!
No doubt with something better filled than water.
A comfortable bed!—and all so private!
Who could suppose intrusion was so near?
Why, this old spider must have fasted long
In his snug den amid the forest here,
Since in his meshes such a lovely fly
Has been entrapped.—But where is fled this saint?
Cease praying.—Come, I'll lead thee where reign mirth
And better feasting; and in me thou'lt find
A jollier lover than a withered hermit.

ELGIVA—(*hiding her forehead with her hands*).

Hence! fly me! I am mad—mad as the winds
And thunders which through yonder forest roar!
My flesh is covered with the spotted plague!
I breathe the pestilence!—If thou wouldst live
Another hour, fly from me!

REDWOLFGAR.

The plague! no—thou
With love's sun-fever only canst infect

Those who approach thee ; for thy breath is like
The purple violet's fragrance on its bank,
Rich with the dews of morn, and I will taste
Fearless that lip whence such sweet odours steal.

ELGIVA.

Away, base villain !——

(As she pushes him from her, he observes the characters on her forehead.)

REDWOLFGAR.

Ha ! thou coysome dame,
Is that the plague upon thy spotted brow ?
Ha, ha, ha, ha !——
This squeamish, delicate, affected virtue
From one who, for the frailties of her sex,
A branded forehead bears !

ELGIVA.

Heaven, art thou deaf
To all my cries ? Where shall I turn for refuge ?
Stern chief of blood ! from thee I dare not hope
For mercy or remorse.—Though on this brow
The burning iron has imprinted guilt,
Yet am I innocent, and virtue is
The only blessing left me.——

(Deep thunder and lightning, which flashes within the mouth of the cave.)

Know'st thou not,
That she who is enshrined in purity
Has a bright angel-band, with swords of flame,
To watch and guard her from pollution's power ?
Dost thou not hear, amid the crashing woods,
Where rush loud whirlwinds of avenging fire,
Their voices in those awful thunder sounds,

And see their lightning brands around thee flashing
The red destruction?

REDWOLFGAR.

I nor hear nor see
Aught but thy voice and the lightning of thine eyes.
How beautiful! despite that damned brand—
I will not give thee up—thou shalt be mine,
Ay, mine, this hour, though howling fiends our couch
O'ercanopy with thunder-storms, and all
The woods that curtain us become one sheet
Of crimson-wavering flame!

(As Redwolfgar rushes to embrace her, tremendous thunder—the rocks in the back part of the cavern are split, and tumble with a horrible crash. The stage is filled with a crimson blaze—Redwolfgar, struck by a flash, staggers and falls—Elgiva kneels to return thanks to heaven as the curtain sinks.) (39)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A grand Pavilion in the camp of the Mercians and Northumbrians.*

Enter Dunstan.

DUNSTAN.

England, I am
Thine own again ! and if our arms prevail
Against this headstrong and voluptuous prince,
Then shall our new and glorious light shine out
O'er all the land—(*Shouts and trumpets without.*)
Now the wild conflict swells !
The cymbalon, and drum, and trumpet's voice, (40)
Are in the banner-cry and carnage din
Of helmed warriors drowned.

Enter Odo.

ODO.

Welcome, my lord,
From a brief exile to thy country's bosom.
We have not in thine absence idle been
In this good work of holy reformation.
Look on yon field—There is a glorious sight !
Those glittering ranks are the church militant.
Under my blessing joyously they march
Forth conquering, and to conquer—We have ta'en
A great revenge, my friend, for thy disgrace.

DUNSTAN.

Heaven aid us !—why, by holy Joseph's thorn,
The Mercians fly before the Wessex men !
Base wretches ! how the cowards turn their backs !
While Edwin, like a veteran warrior, mows
His way through falling ranks ! O, that I had
A soldier's harness, and a soldier's skill,
To wield the weapons of war ! then would I drive
Those dastards back upon the foe, and strew
The field with slaughtered heaps—(*Shouts.*)
St. Austin shield us !
Edwin's blood-sprinkled banners move this way !
We must, my lord, retreat.

ODO.

Retreat ! no, I

Will perish first—a martyr to the church !
But where is Harold, that stout, valiant knight,
Who my retainers leads ?—Look to the right—
My banner keeps the field—I see him now—
Like a tall rock, amid the battle-tide,
He keeps the foe at bay ; his lion voice
Recalls the fugitives.—Brave, noble Harold !
Wulfstan of York, who helm and mitre wears,
Now rushes on afresh, with Oslac joined,
Northumberland's good Earl.

DUNSTAN.

Ay, now I see

The men of Wessex fly.—(*Shouts.*)

ODO.

That is a shout

Of victory on our side.—Cheer up, my lord—
Harold hath seized the standard of the king !
How the press thickens round him—He is down !

Shout ! shout ! the day is won ! the victory's ours !
The church, the church shall triumph o'er her foes !

(Shouts and trumpets nearer and nearer.)

DUNSTAN.

Edwin shall be dethroned.

ODO.

At least deprived
Of England's better provinces, which lie
North of the Thames—such is the cry of all
The Mercians and Northumbrian chief of power,
Who claim the boy, prince Edgar, for their king.

DUNSTAN.

A proper choice—for then the sovereignty
Will on our shoulders rest as his protectors.

(Grand flourish of trumpets.)

*Enter Eric in splendid armour, his sword bloody—Edwin
and others, as captives, followed by Wulfstan, Arch-
bishop of York, Earls of Mercia and Northumberland,
Chieftains, and Soldiers.*

ERIC.

There, good my lord Archbishop, is your prisoner.
This is the third great triumph of revenge !—
Silence those trumpets there !

DUNSTAN.

No, let them sound
To earth and heaven the glory of our conquest.
Their sounds are holy, 'tis the church's voice,
Triumphant o'er a lewd and lawless king.

EDWIN.

Imperious traitor ! art *thou* here again ?

DUNSTAN.

Ay, Edwin, and thou hast no more the power
To bar me from an Englishman's just right
To breathe his native air.

ODO.

Edwin, thou art
The captive now of heaven's high ministers,
Whom thou hast scorned—insulted—

EDWIN.

Rather say
The ministers of hell ! who have made war
Against your lawful prince—a king that ne'er
Infringed his people's liberty or rights.
Ye should be messengers of peace and love,
The tender, harmless pastors of your flocks ;
But ye are traitors, men of strife and death !
Who 've drawn the vengeful sword, and brothers taught
'Gainst brothers to uplift the deadly blade,
The son to strike the father, and the sire
His hand to crimson with his offspring's blood !

ODO.

'Tis thou who art the author of these evils.

EDWIN.

Thou to thy treason add'st the crime of falsehood.
Against a priestly tyranny I drew,
Enforcedly, my sword—I drew it for
My country's liberty, for my own rights,
Not only as a sovereign, but a man,
An English freeman, who, while life remains,
Will struggle to the last, and nobly die,
Ere the dear sanctity of his loved home
Shall by unlawful power be violated.

ODO.

Thou fought'st for guilt—we in the cause of heaven.

EDWIN.

'Tis thus ye seek in mild religion's garb
To hide your proud ambition, treason, thefts—
Yes, ye are robbers of the vilest cast !
Y' have stol'n by violence my dearest treasure,
My wife, my guiltless wife—where, where is she ?
Ye brand-inflicting murderers ! where's my wife ?

DUNSTAN.

I tell thee, stubborn king, thou hast no wife.

EDWIN.

I had, base hypocrites, ere from these arms
Ye banished her to infamy and woe—
And now ye seek to rob me of my crown.

DUNSTAN.

The crown is not thine own—it was to thee
Intrusted by the people, for their good. (41)
Thou, by thy profligate impiety,
That crown hast forfeited, with all thy rights,
Prerogatives, and state—and by our voice,
The chiefs of Mercia and Northumberland
Disown thee for their king ; and their allegiance
Transfer to thy young brother, princely Edgar.

EDWIN.

Ye are a herd of most pernicious traitors !
Perjured deceivers ! and your country's bane !
Insolent priest ! ye dared to interfere
With my domestic happiness and peace,
And, fiend-like, turn my home, which was to me
A heaven, into a hell ! making this heart
Beneath the wolfish fangs of hopeless grief
To bleed unceasingly—and now to crown

Your base indignities, ye would dethrone
Your true, anointed king!

DUNSTAN.

'Tis thy desert;
Thou reap'st the harvest of thy evil doings.

EDWIN.

Insulting hypocrite! my crying wrongs
Make my hot brain with frenzied fury burn!
Ten thousand curses blight you! till ye wither
E'en to the bone, a horrible example
Of heaven's avenging wrath!

ODO.

The curses of th' accursed
Fall on themselves!—I fearlessly decree
That thou shalt be deprived of all thy realms
North of the Thames. Ye champions of the church,
Chiefs of Northumberland and Mercia, choose
Who now shall o'er you reign.

CHIEFS.

Edgar shall be our king—Long live king Edgar!
(*Shouts.*)

ERIC—(*advancing*).

Silence those shouts, ye false and fickle chiefs!
He shall not be your king.

ODO.

Who dares forbid it?

ERIC.

I dare forbid it—I, their rightful prince;
I, Norway's Axe of Blood! the king who roamed
Lord of the ocean, and wild terror spread
Where'er his name was heard! and on whose brows
The diadem of Northumberland was placed.
Your voices hailed me king—to me you swore

Submission and allegiance ; mine ye are,
Mine is the kingdom, and, by all the gods !
Mine it shall be, or I'll destroy your cities,
And desolate with fire and sword your homes !

ODO.

What, has the tomb given back its dead again ?
Or does some demon animate that form ?

ERIC.

Fool ! neither.—Though I with the slaughter'd fell,
On Tadwine's field, I fell to rise again.

ODO.

Seize on th' apostate ! take the ocean-robber !
A prison be his empire.—

ERIC.

Let one here

Dare move his arm to touch me, and this blade
Shall cleave him instantly. If I but wave
This helm above my head, a thousand swords
Will flash from yonder ranks in Eric's cause !
A thousand bowmen point on you their shafts ;
A thousand slingers ready stand to hurl
A stony tempest that shall crush you all ! (42)

ODO.

The ban of heaven be on thee !

ERIC.

I despise,

Fearless, thy curses, as I scorn thy anger !
Pale, shaven-pated fool ! didst think for thee
This arm was lifted in the storm of battle ;
That Eric, twice a sovereign, was thy slave,
Thy tool of vengeance on that Saxon king ?
No, thou wast mine !—I served thee to obtain
A great revenge, for which I thirsted years ;

And,—thanks to thee, meek, humble, saint-like priest,
Thou pander to my rage,—I've somewhat slaked
The burning fire within.

EDWIN.

What have I done
To cause thy fiend-like hate?

ERIC.

Thou?—nothing!—

If thou wouldst learn the cause why I pursue
Thee with unceasing hate, go ask the dead;—
Call up the shades of thy detested race
From whom thou'rt sprung!—Ask Athelstan, thine
uncle,

Through whom the kingdom I of Norway lost!—
Ask Edred, who Northumbria's diadem
Tore from these brows—and ask thy father, who
A price set on my head!—But 'twas this arm—
It is my glory now to tell thee, prince—
Which stabbed him at the banquet to the heart!—
That first revenge was gladness to my soul!
But I'll have greater yet—for I have sworn
By Odin's throne, to root the line of Alfred
Out of these kingdoms!

EDWIN.

Monster! miscreant! fiend!

Thou damned murderer of my royal sire!
My soul is sick with horror to behold thee!

ERIC.

Thou puling idiot! thou cold-blooded coystrel!—
Will not the serpent, when his speckled folds
Are trod on, plant his venom'd sting i' th' heel
Of his proud enemy?—Will not the elk,
Lord of the forest, when by hunters wounded,

Gore the fierce baying bloodhounds till he dies?—
Live yet awhile, thou crown-bereaved king,
To feel increasing misery every hour—
When I think fit, my war-knife shall release thee! [*Exit.*

ODO.

Chieftains of Mercia and Northumberland,
This pagan, this apostate, must not reign
Over one foot of England's Christian soil!—
All who his banner follow, on their heads
Anathemas shall light!—All holy saints
Assoil me from defilement!—Can it be?—
This wicked woman here on English ground—
How has she 'scaped her guards?

Enter Elgiva wildly.

ELGIVA.

Where is my lord,
My own loved husband?—Joy! transporting bliss!—
He lives! he lives! and I once more behold him!
They told me thou wert fallen on yon red field—
Wildly I sought thee mid the blood-drenched slain,
Resolved to die there with thee!

EDWIN.

Thou hast rushed
Into the fell wolf's lair, and I, a captive,
Have not the power to save thee.

ELGIVA.

Yes thou hast—
Thy dagger will release me from all woe!—
Come, plunge it here, and save me from those horrors
Which I shall be again exposed to, when
Torn from thy faithful arms—O, let me die,

Here, here upon thy bosom, and my faint
Departing sighs shall bless thee for thy kindness.

EDWIN.

Alas! what can I say to give thee comfort?—
That lovely brow, so branded—

ELGIVA.

Ay, with shame!

With infamy!—which nothing but the grave,
The wished-for grave can hide—I feel it still!
The glowing iron on these ghastly brows!
A fever scorches up my frenzied brain!—
O, since I have beheld once more thy face,
I now would be at peace.—Come, come, sweet love,
Let's seek the tomb, there is no mercy here—
Nothing but shame, and agony, and horror!
Let me find pity in thy gentle heart;
O, give me sweet release!

ODO.

I must not listen,

As a true minister of holiness,
Thou daughter of perdition, to thy wail.
Edwin, depart, and take what yet remains
To thee of this thy kingdom;—'tis a boon
Of clemency—be thou right thankful for it.
Chiefs, we must in to council.—Thrust him out,
(*To the soldiers.*)

And drag that wanton to our inner tent!

ELGIVA.

Ah, then we meet no more!—O, cruel Edwin,
That had the power to rescue, yet refused!—
Death is my doom! I see it written there,
On that dark brow, implacably stern,
Thou murderous priest!—Edwin, again I call

Upon thee to preserve thy trembling wife
 From the dire, lingering torments of these fiends !—
 O, for the love of Heaven, now set me free !—
 Strike ! strike, and save me !

[Edwin raises his dagger to stab her, but his courage fails him, and he drops his arm; he attempts to speak, but is overpowered by his feelings.]

Ah, thou faint of heart !

This is our last embrace.—Farewell for ever !

[Edwin is hurried off by soldiers, while others drag Elgiva to an inner pavilion.] *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A distant part of the field. A flourish of martial music, shouts, &c.*

Enter Eric, Gunhilda, and Rogvalder in splendid robes.

ERIC.

Once more, my friend,
 Dost thou behold me in my regal sphere,
 King of Northumberland ; and o'er yon host,
 Won to acknowledge me their sovereign leader
 With brave devotedness, have I command.
 Thou too, Gunhilda, movest again a queen,
 Dashing the tempest clouds aside to break
 In all thy radiance forth, as the full moon
 Shines on the ocean when the storms are past.

GUNHILDA.

Long have the heavy clouds hung o'er our fate,
 And others soon may rise.—Our kingly power
 As yet beams feebly ; we have many foes ;
 Dunstan and Odo, with their saintly clan,
 Will strive to stop our course.

ERIC.

O, I will spurn
These Christian priests !—I'll hold them prisoners soon
Within the towers of York.

GUNHILDA.

No ; rather win
The hypocrites by their own selfish arts
Of deep dissimulation ; promise them
Power, honour, riches, and they'll soon be thine,
Thy slaves and minions.—Think how great their sway
O'er all men's minds.

ROGVALDER.

The queen doth counsel well.

GUNHILDA.

What a proud bliss to walk in the new splendour
Of our success, which, like the golden sun
Emerging from a long eclipse, now shines
Once more in all the pomp of regal state !
Amid a bannered army to receive
The worship paid by gallant chiefs, and hear,
As through those gleaming ranks of war we move,
Their shouts of welcome pealing to the skies !—
But hast thou given thy vengeance up on Edwin,
Content with his dethronement ?

ERIC.

No ; by Odin,
I would not spare him for another kingdom !—
My eye is on him ;—like the mountain cat
That with his trembling victim plays awhile
Ere he devours, I with his miseries sport.

GUNHILDA.

We must devise to get within our power

That boy, prince Edgar : while he lives, our throne
Will not be firmly seated in the North.

ERIC.

Yes, he, and every scion of the stock
I will, Gunhilda, sweep from off the earth !—
The kingdom is divided, and the times
Favour our bold attempts.

GUNHILDA.

Ay, then the crown,
The imperial crown of England will be ours !

ERIC.

Exulting thought !—Our dawn of power and glory
Breaks forth and brightens into perfect day !

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Haste, haste, my prince ! the Northmen all revolt !
Rebellion spreads on every side around thee,
Like flames by tempests through a forest driven !—
Odo and Dunstan are pronouncing curses
On all who join thy banners !

ERIC.

Inconstant dogs !
Fickle as waves, that move where list the winds !—
I'll stifle in their blood those bishops' curses,
And bravely face rebellion, though he wear
A lion visage, and his tumult shouts
Outroar the stormy ocean !—Follow me !
Death or a kingdom be my banner cry !

(Exeunt Eric, Rogvalder, and officer.)

GUNHILDA.

Distraction !—Have we toiled, and won the steep,

Thence to be headlong dashed, ere we have drained
The cup of joy revenge held to our lips?—
If fall we must, O for the strength, ye gods!
To make the world one hideous wreck, and sink
In thy dark tomb, destruction, all mankind! [Exit.

SCENE III.—*Another part of the field.*

Enter Elgiva, faint and wounded, supported by a soldier.

ELGIVA.

My bitter foes, to whom I ne'er did wrong,
At length their ruthless malice have completed;
The knives of Odo's warriors have divided
My sinews to the bone!—Blood streams afresh
At every step!—Here will I lie me down,
Good, gentle friend, for I can move no further.
I would not let them mock my parting sighs.—
Thanks for thy goodness—nay, begone, or they
Will punish thee for this last deed of mercy.
[Soldier goes off.

I soon shall be at peace.—Before my eyes
Dim mists are swimming, and strange shapes appear
To flit around me; yet is there one wish,
Which lingers here in this sick, fluttering heart—
Could I but tae a last, a parting look
Of my loved Edwin—hear his voice once more,
And in his arms breathe out—O, this is death!—
It cannot be—— (Faints.

Enter Edwin.

EDWIN.

Listless I wander without hope on earth!—

Of friends, of realms bereft!—O, deeper grief,
Bereft of her who was my dearest joy!

ELGIVA—(*reviving.*)

Ha! (*shrieks*) 'tis my Edwin;—'tis my husband!—
haste,

And take my parting kiss, my last adieu,
Then shall I die in peace!

EDWIN.

Merciful Heaven!—

'Tis she, my own Elgiva! on the ground!
Thus let me raise thee in these doating arms.
O, thou art mine again, and now we'll fly
And dwell in some lone forest, where our foes
Can never find us.—Farewell, kingdoms, crowns—
Adieu to all but thee!—O, we shall yet
Be happy, love.—

ELGIVA.

No, Edwin, not on earth.

EDWIN.

Blood! O, distracting horror! thou art dying!
Those fiends have murder'd thee!—Is there no hope?

ELGIVA.

None, but in heaven, where we shall meet again;
For guiltless have I lived, and innocent
Of any crime I die.—O, my poor mother!
Anguish will break her heart—but the kind saints
Will take her to their mercy.—Edwin, thou
Wilt meet us both hereafter—then what joy!
Life swiftly fades—the dews of death are on me!
Forgive my enemies—I see thee not—
Yet feel thy tender grasp—grieve not for me—
My foes no more can reach me.—Edwin, O—— (*Dies.*)

EDWIN.

O, leave me not—a poor, heart-broken wretch,
Wild with despair!—Alas, she hears me not!
Her eyes are fixed, and her sweet spirit's fled
To dwell in heaven.—I shall not long survive thee!—

Enter Eric.

ERIC.

My kingdom is departed!—yes, 'tis gone,
As fades the pageant of a splendid dream!
And now, like a dark stormy sea, that howls
Round midnight shipwrecks, I for objects seek
To vent my fury on, and would depart
Myself in one fierce tempest of revenge!—
Then shall I, 'mid Valhalla's halls of glory,
Gunhilda meet, to banquet with the brave.—
Joy, thou art here!—

EDWIN.

Hence, curst, detested savage!
Intrude not on my misery, or this arm—

ERIC.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!—A threat to me!
What, whining o'er a carcass!—'Tis thy wife,—
Cold, dead—this is revenge, indeed!—
Howl out thy miseries to the passing winds,
Thy heart-heaved groans are music in my ears.

EDWIN.

Fell regicide! thus I my father's ghost
Avenge on his foul murderer!—(*Stabs Eric.*)
Blood shall have blood! the voice of heaven proclaims it!

ERIC.

O, for a moment's strength—great Odin, strength!

To plant this dagger in his throat—and then
I die content——

*(He staggers forward, and attempts to reach Edwin
with his poniard, but fails.)*

O for this last revenge!—

I—I cannot reach him—ha, ha, ha!—*(Dies.)*

(Flourish of trumpets, shouts, &c.)

ODO—*(without).*

Pursue the pagan dog!

*Enter Odo, Dunstan, Mercian and Northumbrian
Chiefs and Soldiers, with banners.*

Ha! is he dead?

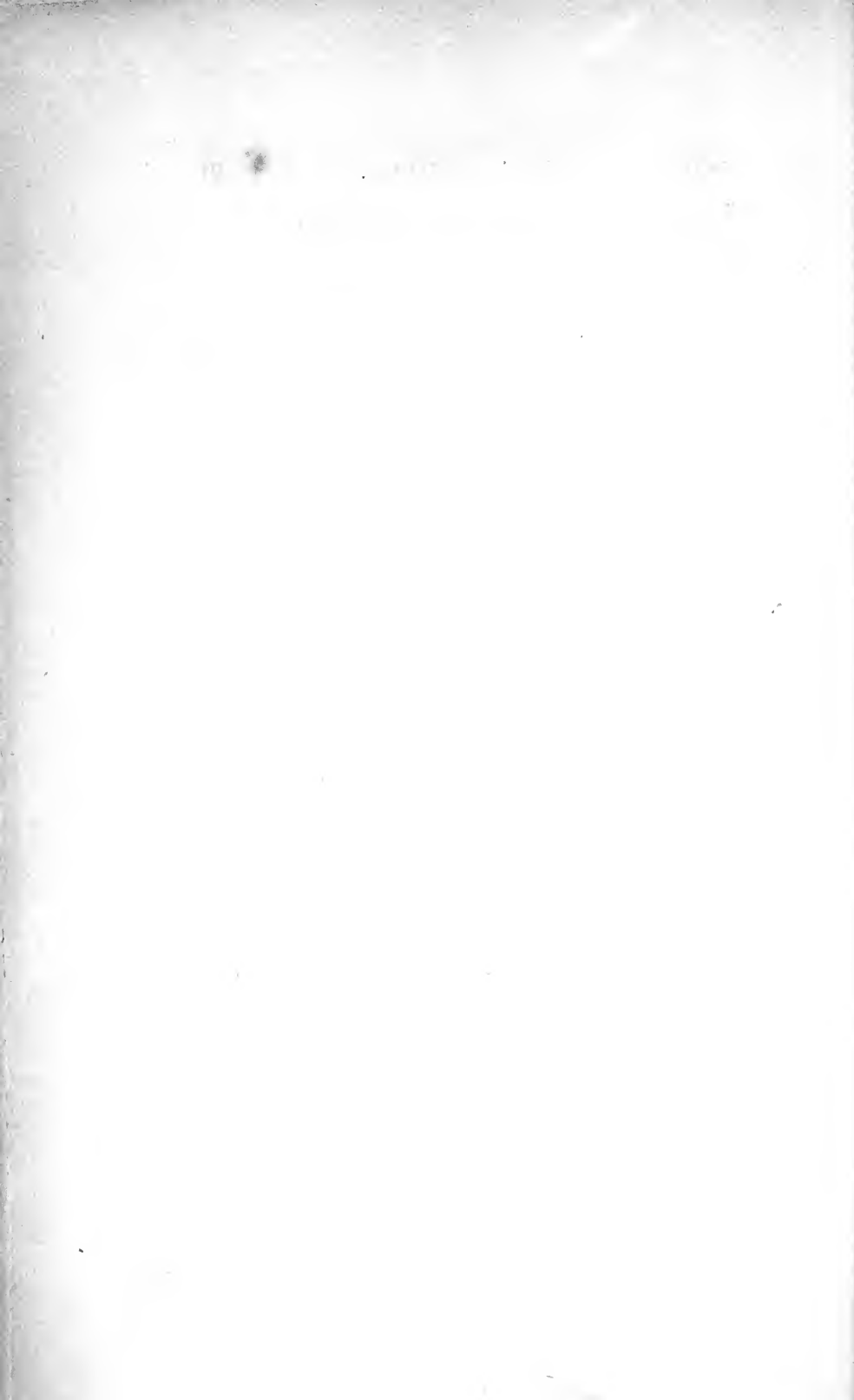
I would have had him, as a base apostate,
Linger out life in torments.—Let the sword
Return into its scabbard, and the land
Have peace through all her borders.—Edgar now
Reigns o'er the North, and triumph crowns the church.

EDWIN.

Behold thy triumphs, thou despitful priest!
A murdered queen, spotless as yonder sunbeams,
Murdered by thy fell agency—a king
Cast by thy treasons from his father's throne,
And rendered by thy savageness of soul,
That knew no softening beam of tender mercy,
More wretched than the most unhappy slave
That pines in hopelessness!—These are thy triumphs!—
But future times will strip thee of thy mask,
And thy dark demon features shall be seen,
The scorn of all mankind!—O, my Elgiva!
The cords of life are broke! but sunbeams flash,
Not of this world, across my deep despair:

They from the brightness of thy beauty beam
Amid yon cherub train.—Stay, lovely spirit,
I come to join thee in the realms of bliss—
Now we shall part no more ! (43)

*(Edwin falls by the body of Elgiva, and all the
characters form a group around them.)*



NOTES.

- (1) *Vested in garb*
Of vassal knight to some accursed Saxon. . . p. 145.

A knight, even in the full chivalric meaning, was a military servant of somebody, either of the king, the queen, a favourite lady, or some person of dignity. In a state very similar to this are the *cnihtas* in the Saxon wills. They appear to us, in like manner, in a rank far above a servant in the Saxon gild-scripes. Of these fraternities, *cnihts* constituted a part, and are distinctly mentioned, though with a reference to some lord to whom they were subordinate; a situation which seems best explained by supposing them free and respectable dependants.—‘If a *cniht* draw a sword, the lord shall pay one pound, and let the lord get it when he may.’—*Hist. Ang. Sax.*

- (2) *Eric, in Norway called*
‘The Axe of Blood.’ . . . p. 145.

‘Eric the Ferocious, surnamed “Axe of Blood,” king of Norway.’—See *Hist. of Norway, by I. P. G. Catteau Calleville, Knight of the Polar Star.*

- (3) *When piracy was honourable craft. . . p. 146.*

Harold, the father of Eric, prohibited piratical excursions on every part of his dominions; he drove Rollo from Norway on that account. Commerce however was in such credit, that Biorn prince of Westfold, the son of Harold Harfagre, became a merchant, and by his more warlike brothers was distinguished by that title. Others also of illustrious ancestry were traders, and are mentioned for the affluence they acquired by it.—*Hist. Ang. Sax.*

- (4) *Their blazing towns
 Lighted me on to plunder, and my burks
 Were loaded with their riches, while their maids
 And bravest youths I sold as captive slaves
 Far from their native homes. . . p. 147.*

'We read that the pirates of the North seized every moveable commodity where they invaded, and destroyed by fire the habitations and growing produce of the field, when they could not remove it; that part of the inhabitants they slew on the spot, and carried away the others for slaves, sharing them by lot; that of these captives they slew such as were too old for labour, and were therefore unsaleable; and that they exposed the others to the public market so unsparingly, that we find at one time a queen, pale, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, and squalidly clothed, and on another occasion, a prince, standing up to be purchased like cattle. We see that, from the plentiful supply, so low was the price, that Olaf the prince, who afterwards became the king of Norway, and the invader of England, was sold for a garment, and that a collection of boys were disposed of for a fine groat.'—*Hist. Ang. Sax.*

What delectable times to have lived in !

- (5) *My follower fell,
 Covered with stabs and blood. . . p. 149.*

Malmsbury asserts that England was filled with fables respecting the death of Edmund; and Wallingford says that it was, up to the period of his writing, uncertain who was the murderer, or *what was the cause*:—'*Sed quâ ratione vel a quo occisus fuit usque ad præsens incertum habetur.*'

- (6) *I fell amid the slain, and since that hour
 It is believed I fell to rise no more. . . p. 149.*

Mailros calls Eric the last king of Northumberland: Eric came into England in 939: if he had then reached the age of thirty, which is not likely, he could be only forty-six at the period of Edwin's coronation.

It is said by Matthew of Westminster, and other authors, that Eric was treacherously killed by Maccus, after his last battle with

Edred, in a desert. Be that as it may, I have chosen, for the purpose of displaying the ferocious character of a Sea-king or Vikingr, that he should survive the loss of his kingdom.

And here perhaps it will not be improper to state, as the facts are mentioned by only one modern historian,—that the noble-minded Athelstan received as fugitives at his court the wife, and Lewis, the son, of Charles the Simple, after the dethronement of that monarch, and also Alan, the banished prince of Bretagne, who was educated at his court. Both these sovereigns, by his assistance, were restored to their dominions. Haco, the virtuous son of Harold of Norway, was also carefully brought up by him, till the Norwegians, expelling the cruel Eric, his brother, called him to the throne of Norway. Such was the generosity of Athelstan, that, on the arrival of the fugitive Eric on the British shores, he gave him the tributary kingdom of Northumberland.

(7) *To join the minstrel bands.* . . p. 151.

The minstrels, or Saxon gleemen, often travelled in large companies.

The emperor Henry III., at his marriage with Agnes Poictou, to please the monks, disappointed the poor minstrels, who had assembled in great multitudes on the occasion, giving them neither food nor reward, but ‘sent them away,’ says a monkish author, ‘with empty purses and hearts full of sorrow.’—*Strutt*.

(8) *St. Peter's beard and hair.* . . p. 152.

‘In Athelstan's time numerous relics were collected from abroad—such as a part of our Saviour's sepulchre, a piece of the real cross, part of the Virgin's dress, St. Bartholomew's head, St. Paul's neck-bones, St. Andrew's stick, St. Stephen's blood, St. Peter's beard and hair, the finger of Mary Magdalen, and a thousand others.’—See *Dugdale's Monast.*, vol. i.

(9) *Enter Gunhilda.* . . p. 152.

In Haralld's Saga, Gunhilda is represented as exceedingly beautiful, but detestably cruel and deceitful; yet highly intelligent and winning in her manners.

- (10) *Unless the harp give immortality. . . p. 155.*

‘The literature of the age,’ says Turner, ‘was in the hands of two very different bodies of men, the clergy and the Scalds.’ These Scalds, or minstrels, as they were called in the middle ages, ‘were commonly of the chief blood of their country, oftentimes of the king’s council, and his attendants in war, that with their own eyes they might be witnesses of great actions, and, not taking them upon trust, might be better able with truth to deliver them to posterity.’

‘Besides the famous actions of kings and great persons composed in verse, the Scalds drew out genealogies of their forefathers, as it appears in the chronicle of Olaus, where there is mention made of one of them. *Oc taldi han longfeda til Semingh*—He wrote their progeny to Seming; and again, *It ni Kuediera Wptald xxx. langfedgar Rognwalls*—In this verse are reckoned up thirty descents of Rognwall. Upon this account these poets were in great favour with princes, and were liberally provided for in their courts.’

- (11) *The fair, and market-cross,
And well-frequented bridge, are places where
Such minstrels should resort. . . p. 156.*

Alhelm is said to have sung his poems on the bridges, for the purpose of instructing the people.

- (12) *His next song should be, like the dying swan’s,
His own funereal lay. . . p. 157.*

‘It is very remarkable that the ancient Icelandic bards should have got hold of that fabulous opinion of the swan’s being a singing-bird, which so generally prevailed among the Greek and Roman poets.’—*Notes to Northern Antiquities.*

- (13) *And chant thy songs to dancing bears and beggars. . . p. 158.*

‘One part of the gleeman’s profession, as early as the tenth century, was teaching bears and other animals to dance, to tumble, and to put themselves into a variety of attitudes, at the command of their masters.’—See the engraving of an Anglo-Saxon gleeman’s bear-dance, in *Strutt*, p. 176.

(14) *I loved a maid.* . . p. 160.

Vide the Life of Dunstan, *Anglo-Saxons*.

(15) *Early visions have foretold my greatness.* . . p. 161.

'He (Dunstan) frequently visited the old British church at Glastonbury, and it is said that he had there a vision of his future greatness, and that a venerable phantom pointed out the place where he was to build a superb monastery.'

(16) *The order of Benedict.* . . p. 162.

In the tenth century a new religious discipline was spread in Europe, which occasioned the misfortunes of Edwin. This was the Benedictine order of monks. Odo, one of the order and its warmest patron, was the son of one of those ferocious Northmen who had infested England under Ingwar and Ubbo. He had been himself a soldier in the first part of his life, in the reign of Edward, and he quitted the military profession to assume the ecclesiastic. He attended Athelstan in the battle of Brunanburh; and as other bishops combated at that time, and as it is confessed that he knew immediately of the king's sword breaking in the conflict, and supplied the loss, it is probable that he partook of the fray, though his encomiasts talk only of his prayers. These circumstances may be worth noticing, as they explain that stern severity which was so unhappily exerted against Edwin and Elgiva.—*Anglo-Sax.*, vol. ii.

(17) *We'll have no married priests.* . . p. 163.

In the first general Lateran Council, 1123, the twentieth canon forbids priests, deacons, or monks, to have wives or concubines, and declares null and void the marriages which they have contracted.

The great object of Dunstan and Odo was to convert the clergy into monks, and to fill the nation with Benedictine institutions.

(18) *That ferocious wolf who, when
The end of all things comes, shall break his chain,
And men and gods devour.* . . p. 167.

'Odin is devoured by the wolf Fenris at the RAGNAROCKUR, or the twilight of the gods,'—*Thirty-second Table of the Edda.*

- (19) *And the blest Virgin Mother sacred balm
Upon the anointed shed ! . . p. 168.*

Walsingham gives an account of the pretended miraculous anointing oil given to Becket by the Virgin Mary, with which Henry the Fourth was anointed, to inspire a popular belief that he was chosen by heaven, and ordained to be the champion of the church. This tom-foolery, no doubt, greatly influenced him to burn those whom the priests styled heretics.

- (20) *I joy because the honours of this day
Are worn by him I love. . . p. 169.*

‘The Anglo-Saxon queen was crowned as well as the king, until the reign of Egbert, when this honour was taken from her. The crimes of the preceding queen, Eadburga, occasioned the Anglo-Saxons to depart awhile, in this respect, from the customs of all the German nations.’—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*

- (21) *He from whose lips immortal music breathes,
In poesy, the language of the gods. . . p. 175.*

‘It was the constant study of the Scalds to lift their poetic style as much as possible above that of their prose ; so that they formed a kind of new language to themselves, which they called, after the manner of the Greeks, *Asommaal*, the language of the Gods.’—*Northern Antiq.*

- (22) *Such majesty and grace dwell in his form,
That like a god in mortal shape he moves ! . . p. 177.*

Edwin (not Edwy, which is only an abbreviation, like Willy for William) was surnamed *Panculus*, or *All-Fair*.

- (23) *Those mighty chiefs
Who chose thee for their king. . . p. 180.*

The crown was elective as well as hereditary among the Anglo-Saxons, and often they deviated out of the direct line to advance to the throne one of a collateral branch.

- (24) *Athelstan, renownedly the first
Great monarch of all England ! . . p. 182.*

The claims of Egbert, to have been the first monarch of all

England, are, says Sharon Turner, ' unquestionably surreptitious. The competition can only be between Alfred and Athelstan. Our old chroniclers vary on this subject: some denominate Alfred the first monarch; some give it to Athelstan. The truth seems to be, that Alfred was the first monarch of the Anglo-Saxons, but Athelstan was the first monarch of England. The Danish sovereigns, to whose colonies Alfred chose, or was compelled, to yield Northumbria and East Anglia, divided the island with him; therefore, though he first reigned monarch over the Anglo-Saxons, from the utter destruction of the octarchy, it was not till Athelstan completely subjugated the Anglo-Danish power, that the monarchy of England arose.'

(25) *Could I have had my will, I would have poisoned
The banquet-cups of yesterday's proud feast. . . p. 186.*

' Gunhilda poisoned her husband's brother Halfdan.'—*Harald's Saga*.

(26) *there to fill
The vanquished foeman's wine-skull for the brave. . . p. 187.*

' In Valhalla their cups are the skulls of enemies they have slain. A crowd of virgins wait upon the heroes at table, and fill their cups as fast as they empty them.'—*Edla, Iceland Mythol.*

(27) *our Saxon laws
Award not death to any, save the free
Who take the robber's craft. . . p. 197.*

' If an Englishman that hath lost his freedom afterwards *steal*, he shall be hanged on the gallows, and no recompense made to his lord; if any one kill such a man, he shall make no recompense on that account to his friend, unless he redeem him within a twelvemonth.'—*Laws of King Ina*.

(28) *In thee centres
All I can wish for, save my people's love. . . p. 199.*

The character of Edwin, notwithstanding the lying defamation of the monks, was amiable and virtuous; and had he not been prematurely cut off by his inexorable enemies, his reign would no doubt have been an honour to the English nation.

‘Tenuit namque quadrennio per regnum *amandus*.’—*Ethelward*, p. 849.

‘Non illaudabiliter regni infulam tenuit.—In principio regnum ejus decentissime floreret, prospera et lætabunda exordia mors immatura perrupit.’—*Huntingdon*.

- (29) *Who in her wantonness hath urged him on,
Like Jezebel of old, to slay God's priests.* . . p. 204.

‘MSS. Cleop. This author, and Adelard, Nero, c. 7, politely attach to the lady's name such epithets as *impudens virago*, *Jezebel*, &c. Osberne uses the delicate phrase of *nefandæ meretricis*, and sagaciously informs us, *Mulieri animum instigat diabolus*.’—*Notes to Anglo-Sax*.

- (30) *We do decree,
That for thy wanton deeds, and those vile arts,
Given wholly to the devil.* . . p. 208.

We have put Osberne's wise opinion into the mouth of Odo, as quite appropriate to his ignorant, superstitious, and savage character.

- (31) *I will lay
Aside these robes, and mourn in dust and sackcloth;
Barefooted I on pilgrimage will walk.* . . p. 209.

‘The laws of Edgar state, that a mighty man, if rich in friends, may thus, with their aid, lighten his penance. He must first make his confession, and begin his penance with much groaning. Let him then lay aside his arms and his idle apparel, and put on haircloth, and take a staff in his hand, and go barefoot, and not enter a bed, but lie in his court-yard. If this penance be imposed for seven years, he may take to his aid twelve men, and fast three days on bread, green herbs, and water. He may then get seven times an hundred and twenty men, who shall all fast three days, and thus make up as many days of penance as there are days in seven years.’—*Leg. Sax.*

- (32) *for I am the foe inflexible
To vice and crime!* . . p. 209.

‘It is not denied by the old chroniclers, that Odo was active in

these measures; why else is the passage added immediately after the murder, stating his being the inflexible enemy to all vice?'—*Sharon Turner.*

(33) *Or some fierce tempest,
Raised by grim witches. . . p. 212.*

'There are penal statutes in the capitularies of Charlemagne, in the canons of several councils, and in the ancient laws of Norway, against such as raise storms and tempests—*Tempestarii* being the name given to such persons.'

(34) *Away! I cannot bear to look upon thee!
Thou hast the ruthless spirit of a fiend! . . p. 216.*

The mantle of tyranny and assumption of power seem to have descended on the shoulders of Odo from the celebrated St. Cyril (a precious saint!), bishop and patriarch of Alexandria. The first act of authority which we read Cyril did, after his elevation to the see by force and sedition, was to shut up the churches of the Novatians, seize on the sacred utensils, and plundering the house of their bishop, Theopemptus, drive him out of the city, stripped of every thing he possessed. Another instance of his usurpation of civil authority, was on account of a riot, which was occasioned by one Hierax, a schoolmaster (a professed admirer of the bishop), in which some violent Christians were killed by the Jews, who were numerous in Alexandria. Cyril, the next morning after the fray, by break of day, put himself at the head of the Christian mob, and without the knowledge of the governor, took possession of the synagogue, drove the Jews out of Alexandria, pillaged their houses, and allowed the Christians who were concerned with him in the riot, to appropriate to themselves all their effects. But what makes the character of Cyril come more nearly in resemblance to that of Odo, is the inhuman murder, by his connivance, of the celebrated Hypathia, the daughter of Theon, a learned philosopher, who governed the Alexandrian academy with great applause, in the latter part of the fourth century. On his death he was succeeded as head of the academy by his daughter, whom he had educated not only in all the qualifications of her sex, but in the most abstruse sciences. This amiable lady, possessed of great talents, was assailed, when passing through the streets of Alexandria, by one of Cyril's monks, and dragged into a church, where she was stripped of her garments, and had her flesh torn

off with sharp tiles ; and when this accomplished female died beneath the torments of the monks and priests, they tore her limb from limb, and dragged her mangled remains about the streets, and then burnt them in the fire.—*Vide Socrat.*, l. viii. c. 14.

- (35) *Northumberland and Mercia are in arms ;
They shout for Dunstan, and demand him home.* . . p. 217.

‘ The remainder of Edwin’s reign is not distinctly related, but the main results are clear. The Mercians and Northumbrians rebelled against him, drove him beyond the Thames, and appointed Edgar, his brother, a boy, to govern them in his stead. Dunstan was immediately recalled with honour.’

- (36) *Would not the distant music of some band
Of gleemen, Cuthbert, and their merry jugglers,
Returning from the hall of lordly thane.* . . p. 219.

‘ It was no uncommon thing with the itinerant minstrels to find admission into the houses of the opulent, by whom they were handsomely rewarded for the exertion of their talents.’—*Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes*.

- (37) *Ay, Hubert, or the sight of passing mass-thane,
Mounted upon his steed, with jewelled trappings,* . . p. 219.

Mass-thane, a clerical nobleman.

Jennettes of Spain that ben so white,
Trapped to the ground with velvet bright.

Squyer of Low Degree.

Their gold rings contained gems ; and even their garments, saddles, and bridles, were sometimes jewelled.—*Anglo-Saxons*.

- (38) *Or on a visit to some giver of loaves.* . . p. 219.

The origin of the title of ‘ my lord.’ ‘ The etymology of this title of honour,’ says Coats, ‘ is well worth observing. It is compounded of *illaf*, a loaf of bread, and *ford*, to give, or *aford* ; so that *illaford*, now lord, implies a giver of bread ; because in those ages such great men kept extraordinary houses, and fed all the poor, for which reason they were called “ givers of bread,” a thing

now much out of date, great men being fond of retaining the title, but few regarding the practice for which it was originally conferred.'

(39) *Redwolfgar, struck by a flash, staggers and falls* . . p. 231.

The incident of Redwolfgar's being struck by a flash of lightning, as far as my knowledge goes, is quite new to the drama; but it is a circumstance as far from being *improbable* as it is from being *impossible*. We have but too many instances to prove this, many persons being killed by lightning, both without and within their houses, almost every summer.

(40) *The cymbalon, and drum, and trumpet's voice* . . p. 221.

The drum is a tense leather stretched on two cones, joined together by their acute part, which resounds on being struck.—*Bede*.

(41) *The crown is not thine own—it was to thee
Intrusted by the people, for their good* . . . p. 236.

It has been before stated that the Saxon crown was elective.

(42) *A thousand slingers ready stand to hurl
A stony tempest that shall crush you all* . . p. 238.

The following curious fragment, transcribed from a manuscript translation of Vegetius de Re Militari, so early as 1408 (reign of Henry IV.) by a Mr. Green, will show, that the use of slings was continued down at least as far as that period in the English army:

'How the sheltron of the legions shall be lerned and taught.—Now will we shew how the sheltron of the legions shall be taught to set himself in ordenaunce in caas that ennmyes ben nigh, and this may bee shewed by setting of one legion, after that yef need be of moo, the horsemen evermore shal bee set in the corners. The sheltron of the fotemen of the fyrst sort, shal bee set in the ryght corner, and wete thou well that cohort is not ellis but the numbre of fyfty hundred knyghtis, and every legion is ten cohorts. Than, as I sayd before, the sheltron of fotemen of the fyrst cohort shulde be set in the fyrst corner of the sheltron, and to hem the secunde cohort shal be joined. The iiii cohort shall

holde the middes of the sheltron, and to hem the iiiith shalbe knytt. The vth cohort shall hold the lyfte corner of the sheltron, and tho that furthestmost bee in fyght ben cleped princes, and other ben cleped principalis, this ordenaunce was cleped the grete armature, the which had helmes, haberjons, and brest plates, leg harnesse, grete swordis, that men clepe spatys, and also litill swordis, that were cleped litill spatys. They had also shaftis leded at the ende, five at the lest, the which wer cast with grete myght. Also they had double dartis, one of the more syse, another of the lasse; the more had an hede of iron iii square, the weight of iv uncis, and the shafte of v foot and an halfe, the which now is cleped a pile, and to the use of this shot the knyghtis wer most used; the which shot, and it wer vastly and myghtly shot, it persed shield and haberjon, and horsemen oftetyme destroyed; another lesse dart they had, the which had an hede of iron iii square, of v uncis weight, the shafte of iii fote and an halfe, the which now is cleped a broche, and sometyme it was cleped a litill broche. The first sheltron is of princes, the secunde of shaftemen, that with justing speris, casting speris, and dartis, ben taught and lerned to fyght; after hem were sett lyght armed men, with sheldis covered, the which fyght with battis of lede, with swordis, and with shott of hande; after hem comen bowmen, armed with bassenettis and brest plates, gird with sverdis, bowes and arrowes; after hem was sett *hand slyngis* and *shaft slyngis*, *castyng stones*; after hem was sett arrowblasters, the which shotten arrows and quarrellis with arblastes and bowes of brake. The secunde sheltron, in the same wise, was armis, in which wer sett knyghtis of the spere, both in the secunde sheltron, the vi cohort of knyghtis hilden the ryght corner, and to hem wer joined the seventh; what a cohort is I have shewed before; the viii and ixth cohort hilden evermore the myddes of the sheltron; the xth, in the secunde sheltron, hild enmore the lefte corner.'

The Saxons were very skilful in the use of the sling; its form is preserved, says Strutt, in several of their paintings, and the manner in which it was used as far back as the eighth century. In a MS. poem in the Cotton Library, entitled 'Knyghthode and Batayle,' written about that period, says the above author, are the following lines:—

Use eck the cast of stone, with slynge or honde;
 It falleth ofte yf other shot there none is,
 Men harneyesd in steel may not withstonde
 The multitude and myghty cast of stonys;
 And stonys in effecte are every where,
 And slynges are not nyous for to beare.

(43) *Now we shall part no more ! . . .* p. 249.

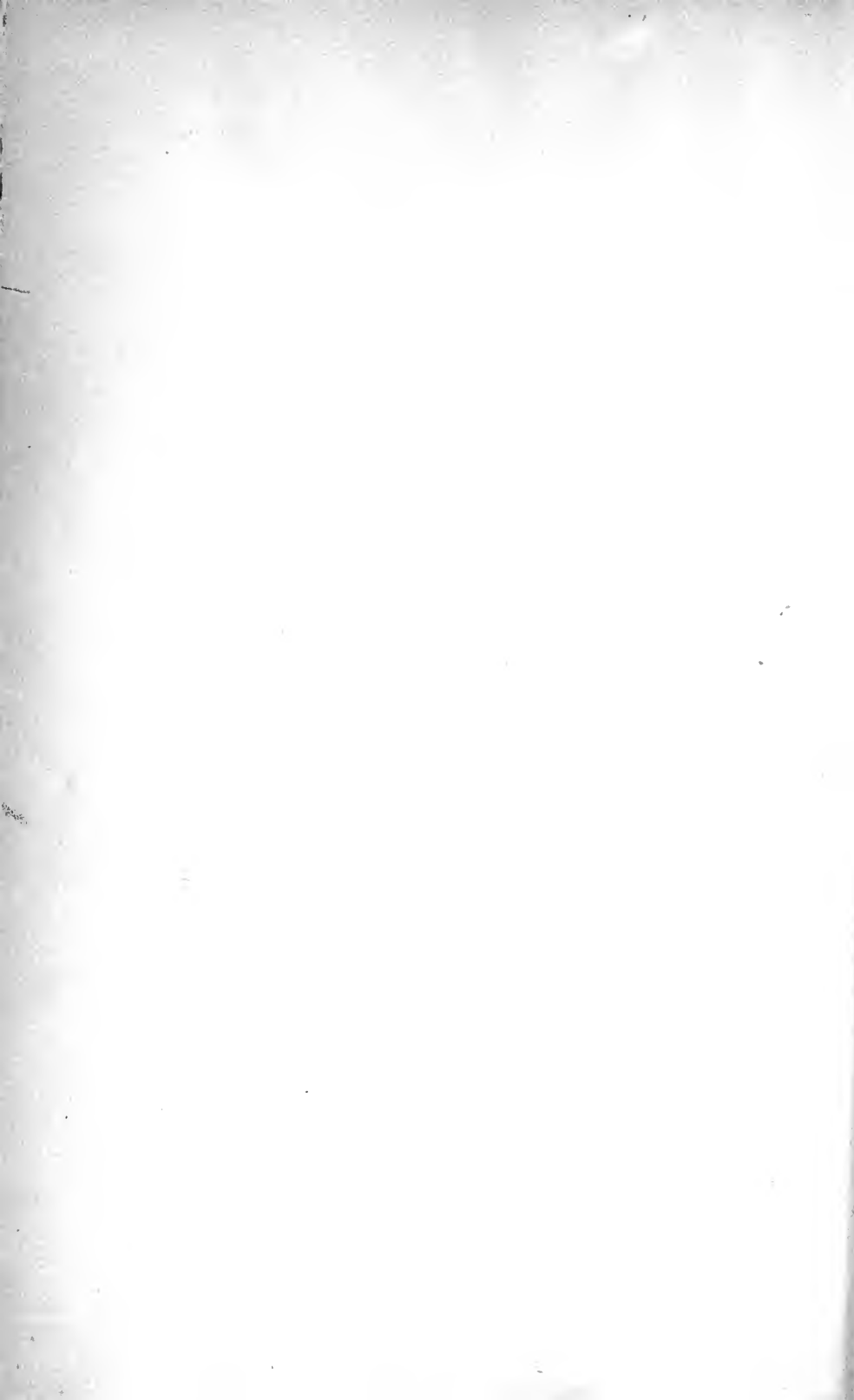
‘ One author even states that he was assassinated. If, from the want of fuller evidence, we hesitate at believing this, we must at least admit the affecting account that his spirit was so wounded by his persecutions, that, unable to endure unmerited odium, deprivation of power, a brother’s rebellion, and the murder of his beloved wife, he sunk pining into death before he had reached the full age of manhood.’—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*

END OF EDWIN AND ELGIVA.



THE IMPERIAL PIRATE.

A TRAGEDY.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CARAUSIUS, Emperor of Britain.

ALLECTUS, Consul, and pretended Friend to the Emperor.

DUNGARTH,

AMBROSIOUS,

ARDOC,

CASWALLON,

VINDOMA,

} British Princes.

DHU CADERN, Friend to Dungarth.

MONTCELLIUS, a Tribune.

The Arch-Druid.

2nd Druid.

The Rex Sacrorum.

OCTAVIUS, an Ambassador of Rome.

LILIUS, a Tribune.

FLAMIN.

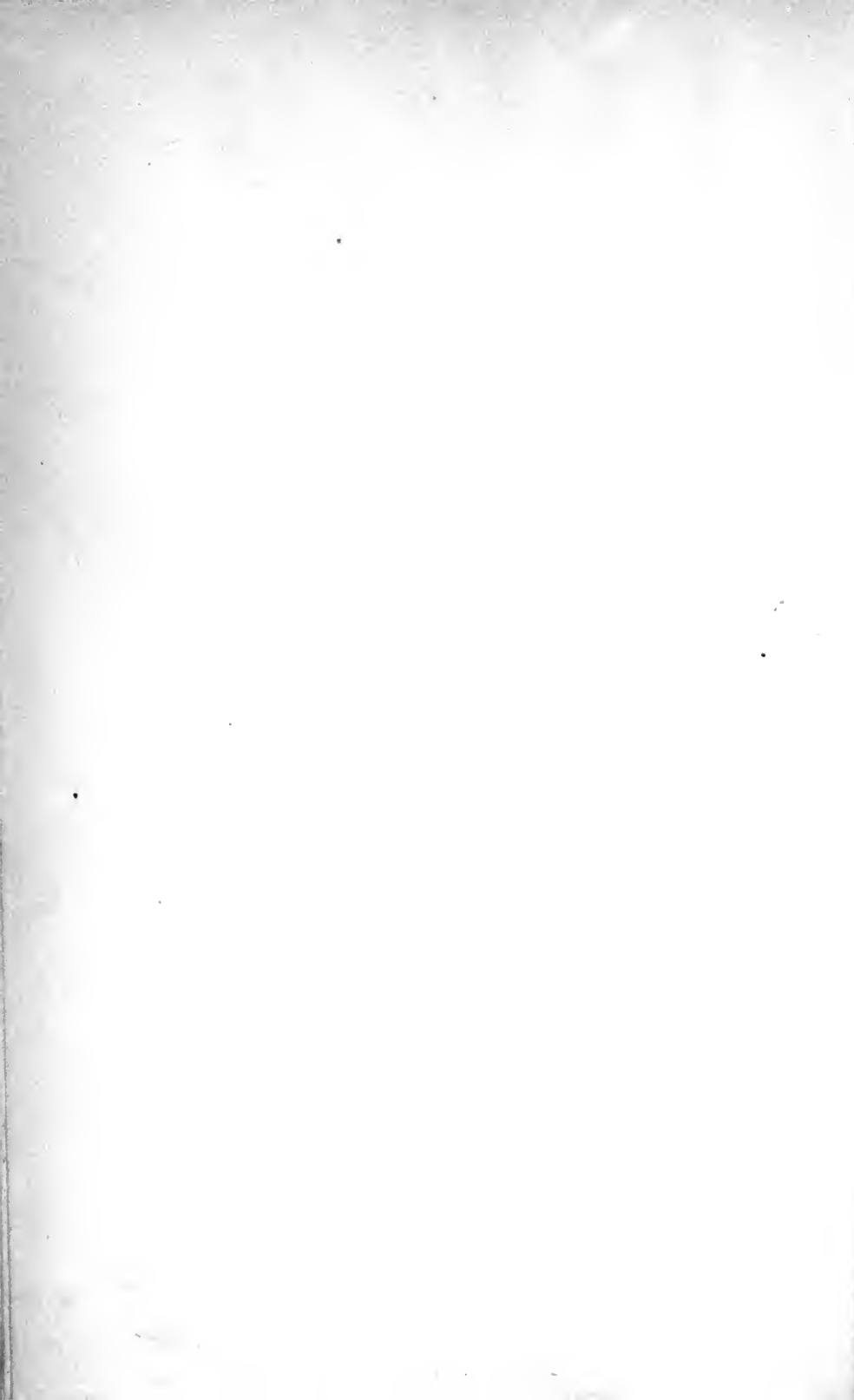
Messenger.

ORIUNA.

MALWINA.

RUTHINIA.

Roman and British Soldiers, Officers, Druids, Bards, &c.



THE IMPERIAL PIRATE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A wooded Valley, dim with the shadows of evening. At a distance, a green mound, or tumulus, covered with flowers.*

Enter Malwina.

MALWINA.

HAIL, hour of eve! when fond remembrance flings
Her spells of pleasing sadness o'er the soul,
Recalling words and forms of those we love,
Whom death or distance from our arms hath torn.
This is the hour I come to mourn the dead,
Where I have raised a monument to him
Whose bones lie tombless on some battle-field,
Far from his native land!—Kind Nature shares
My hopeless grief—from the dim forest comes
Sad music, like the sound of lonely harps,
When they foretell the fall of warrior-kings: (1)
The river wanders by with plaintive voice,
And the leaf-hidden nightingale laments
With passionate feeling, as if she had lost,
By fowler's snare, like me, her gentle mate!
O, that my soul could with yon sun-bird mount
Where, purple-clouded, on the world below

Gleams a rich glory, like the gate of heaven ;
There dwell in light and blissfulness with thee,
My loved, my lost Ambrosius !—

Enter Caswallon, in the garb of a Hunter.

CASWALLON.

In tears, Malwina ?—Nay, my child, forbear—
All sorrow, fruitless sorrow, must be laid
Henceforth aside.—Weep for the dead no more.
Carausius the renowned, who reigns supreme
O'er Britain's guarded isle, and is at Rome
Acknowledged emperor, calls thee to his arms.
His messengers, from Sorbiodunum's towers,
Erst the time-hallowed city of the sun, (2)
Are at our cavern-home, and wait to lead
Thee, my loved forest-maid, to Cæsar's throne !
The pomp of empire, like the morn-beams bright
Waking the flowers, on thy young beauty dawns
To dry those tears, and banish every cloud
Of unavailing sorrow from thy brow.

MALWINA.

The shadows of the grave would be to me
More welcome than the splendours of a throne. (*Aside.*)
These are the tears of love, my princely sire,
Shed o'er the simple monument of him
Who won, by your consent, my virgin heart.
Honoured for valour by the Roman legions,
He Dioclesian's banners in the east,
To win new glory, followed—There, alas ! (3)
The flower of Britain's knightly warriors fell,
Wounded to death on Persia's blood-drenched plains !
I, by thine aid, yon funeral mound have raised, (4)

And still my sad delight has been at morn
And evening hour to visit this loved spot,
Where last we parted—ne'er to meet again !

CASWALLON.

Come, dry thy tears, and quit this mournful scene.

MALWINA.

Must I this valley leave, so long my home,
To dwell with strangers in a world unknown ?
Yes—I remember now that I have pledged
(Ah ! 'twas your fond entreaties that prevailed)
My hand to this Carausius,—but my heart—
That never can be his !—O, my Ambrosius !
Thy cherished image dwells eternal there,
And thou art ever present to my sight,
In all the manly beauty of thy youth,
Or on the fields of death, with clymore-gash,
Cold, sleeping in thy blood.

CASWALLON.

Nay, my sweet child,
Banish such gloomy fancies from thy mind ;
For now the time is come that thou shouldst know
The whole of my sad story, and why we
Have in this forest dwelt so long alone :
Thou hast to learn the cause which drove me forth
A desert wanderer from my goodly home,
And the time-reverenced honours of our line.
List to me then.—

MALWINA.

I do attentively.

CASWALLON.

In Coritania's ancient city stood
The noble palace of my princely sires, (5)

And Roman temples crowned its swelling hills,
That yielded scenes rich as Italian climes.
Thou wert too young its beauties and its pomp
To bear in mind, ere we were driven from thence
To herd with brutes in caves and forest-wilds—
When Dioclesian gave his stern commands
That all should be destroyed who dared refuse
To offer sacrifice with pagan rites,
Britain, which had till then the fiery scourge
Of persecution 'scaped, became the scene
Of dreadful slaughter ! In one day were slain
A thousand holy martyrs near the walls
Of sad Eto celum ! named from that deed (6)
The blood-red field of death !

MALWINA.

O, horrible !

CASWALLON..

On then the ruthless bands of pagans came,
Like streams of fire storm-driven along the forest.
I and my Coritanians were of those
Who in this ocean-guarded isle embraced
The holy faith of Christ, scorning to bow
In homage at the heathens' idol-shrines.—
Firmly resolved, with unpolluted rites,
To worship Him, the true and only God,
I was about, Malwina, forth to go,
And bravely meet those hell-excited hordes,
Whose crimson knives reeked to th' insulted heavens
With Christian blood, protesting by the saints
To fearlessly proclaim my faith, and win
The star-refulgent wreath of martyrdom !

MALWINA.

O, how did you escape ?

CASWALLON.

Hear me, my child.

Already, on the evening winds up gushed
The redly struggling fires on every side;
From Coritania's smoke-encircled fanes;
While wolfish howlings of those pagan bands,
The roar of ravenous flames, the crash of tower
And falling temple, mingled with the screams
Of maid and matron, youth and hoary age,
Rang through my palace-halls, as on I passed,
Nobly to die for God!—Ah, then it was
That thou, my child, my only, tender child,
Didst, shrieking, rush in terror to these arms!
O, at that moment of expressless horror,
I felt my spirit melt—the martyr's strength,
The glorious firmness of unshrinking faith,
Which fills the soul it fires with bliss to meet
Death in his direst form, all, all was quenched
In fond paternal love and fear for thee!

MALWINA.

Ah, my dear father!

CASWALLON.

O, the utmost vengeance,

My bitterest foes could in their malice wreak
On *me*, I should undauntedly have scorned!
But to behold my child hurled in the flames,
Or tossed on pagan spears; to view her form
Dabbled in blood, and hear her dying cries,
All powerless to avenge or to defend—
O, my Malwina!—I for thee gave up
The crown, the martyr's sun-bright crown of glory!
Hid in the garb of serf, with thee concealed
Beneath my vest, I rushed through flames and blood,

T

And from destruction's lion-fangs escaped.
Hither to these wild, unfrequented shades
I fled to hide my little trembling dove
From the fell eagle's talons, and became
A hunter of the forest.—Young Ambrosius,
Prince of the Catyellani, wandering here, (7)
With hound and hawk, till lost amid these woods,
Thou, finding, to our secret cave didst lead :
He gazed on thy mild beauty, gazed and loved—
But the brave youth is fall'n ; and thou hast paid
Meet tribute to the memory of his virtues.
Now other thoughts should fill thy gentle breast,
For thou it is who canst thy sire restore
To all his wonted rights—and then, to view
Thee seated on this isle's imperial throne
Will more than recompense his sorrows past,
Making his few days blessed.

MALWINA.

Ah, my lord,

This emperor, this Carausius—

CASWALLON.

Is a prince

Renowned for warlike deeds throughout the world.
Though not a Christian, yet in chains hath he
Fell Persecution's raging blood-fiend bound.
When this great chief his host against the Picts
And northern robbers led, I, from these woods
Emerging, met him in bright Lindum's halls, (8)
And boldly claimed the kingdom of our house,
By an usurping pagan now possessed.
Love in the warrior's soul, as with me thou
Didst kneel before him, lit his passion-flame
From the pure radiance of thy dove-like eyes.

The chieftain started at the sudden blaze,
And swore, by Jove, when from the field of spears
He came triumphant, if thou wouldst bestow
On him thy hand, the honours to restore
Of our ancestral line—He hath in pomp
To Cæsar's towers returned, with victory crowned
O'er the wild savage nations of the North,
And claims thee for his bride.

MALWINA.

Ah, good my lord,
A gloomy fierceness on his pale brow sits,
Repelling soft emotions; and his eye,
Darker than is the wintry midnight cloud,
That holds the struggling thunder, sheds a light
Which dazzles like the storm-flash when it strikes
The giant oak-tree from its mountain throne.
And then the voice of this wild pirate-king—
'Tis rough as his own seas, when they in wrath
With tempest-winds contend.

CASWALLON.

O, thou shalt find,
My gentle child, that his dark eye will shed
O'er thee a light, mild as the evening star,
On its own brightness gazing in the stream,
While his deep voice will sound as musical
As winds that wander through the twilight groves,
Caressing the young flowers.

MALWINA.

Ah, sad the hour
When we, my father, shall from hence depart!
What charms have thrones or palaces for us,
Whose happy dwelling is a sparry cave,
With pillar of rich chrysolite, and arch

Of rainbow-gleaming gems; where a bright fount
Of living-water in the centre flows,
Around whose brim a thousand glittering plants
Their crystal leaves and ruby blossoms spread,
Like bowers of fairy-land?

CASWALLON.

Ah, simple maid,
A transient glimpse of that great world which lies
Beyond this forest only has been thine—
Unknown to thee the joys of wealth and power.

MALWINA.

And who, like us, for such false joys would sigh?
Our empire is this quiet, sun-loved vale
Of woods and waters, harmony and flowers;
Nor want we here fit subjects for our state:—
The wolf-dog watches nightly in our cave,
An honest, faithful guard, and still without,
As morn peeps laughing through the misty skirts
Of the departing night; and when eve steals
Like dim-seen spirit down the shadowy vale,
Our forest-bards make all the green woods ring
With carols wild of love: on yonder fields,
Where, like a hermit's life, the river flows
In its sweet placidness, reflecting heaven,
The roebuck wanders, and the fearless fawn
Sleeps in the sunshine.—Here all beasts of chase,
And birds of brilliant plumage, make their home;
While o'er yon waves the lily-pinioned swan
Queens it in all her pride. Is not this state
Far happier than the monarchy of kings?
Treason and murder dwell in princely halls,
As thou hast told me, and gem-blazing crowns
Yield their proud wearers nought but anxious cares.

O, give thy kingdom to the stranger, who
Dwells in thy fathers' towers—for thou art old,
And I regard it not, nor would exchange
For the most gorgeous palace of the Cæsars
This dear-loved valley and its flowery woods.

CASWALLON.

Poor child of Nature ! thou this humble state
Of savage life wilt scorn, when on thy sight,
In the bright city of the sun, shall burst
The splendid festival, the bridal pomp
Of an imperial court, whose rainbow dyes,
And perfumed lights, and throngs, all jewel showered,
Pleasure's own heaven shed o'er th' enchanted halls ;
While music's melting chords of rapture sigh
Voluptuous languishment.

MALWINA.

Sweeter I ween,
And far more innocent, to me the songs
Of nightingales amid these solemn woods,
When moon and stars fling from their golden urns
Glory that shines eternal.

CASWALLON.

Yet bethink thee—
For I indeed am old—how soon thy sire,
Thy sole protector in this desert place,
May with his fathers sleep, and leave thee here
A prey to horrid loneliness and want.
O, could I close my dying eyes in peace,
And know that thou wast friendless and forlorn,
In a strange world a stranger?—Then consent
To my fond wishes. Come, let us depart
With this brave emperor's messengers of love.
Fain would I, ere my death, in him behold

The husband and protector of my child.
Since I the glorious prize of martyrdom
Gave up to save thy life, O, for my sake,
Britain's imperial wreath accept and wear,
By birthright thine, descended from the race
Of her most ancient kings; then shall thy sire
Depart in peace when his last days are numbered.

MALWINA.

Whate'er my feelings, for your sake will I
Be all you wish—indeed, indeed I will. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A grand Roman Hall in the Palace of Sorbiodunum, (9) with lofty pillars of marble, Tyrian hangings, superb mirrors of glass, (10) statues of heroes and gods, and beautiful paintings representing the sea-fights of Carausius. (11) Magnificent vases of silver, placed on pedestals of ivory; urns of myrrh and amber, filled with exotic flowers; and cassolets of gold, with smoking odours.*

Enter Allectus.

ALLECTUS.

What idle show of pomp is here displayed!
Is this a pirate's cabin?—For bright swords,
And spears, and all the implements of war,
Here stand scent-breathing urns, statues, and flowers,
And all the ornaments that ever shone
In Nero's golden palace. Did not dark
And mighty passions my fierce bosom stir,
I should with laughter make these proud halls ring
To see such splendid fooleries. Now the slave
Has o'er his late rag-covered shoulders flung (12)

Th' imperial purple, he in pride outgoes
The most voluptuous Roman. Thus it is,
When beggars from their dunghills rise to greatness,
They outrage all decorum !

Enter Montcillius.

Welcome, Tribune ;
 Thou com'st right opportunely.—

MONTCELLIUS.

Noble consul, (13)

When will the lingering wheels of our brave plot
Be set in motion? The præfectus thou
Of our Prætorian bands shouldst——

ALLECTUS.

Bright-haired boy,
Dost thou this cabin of a rover mark ?
How like an armoury hung !—Ambition's fool !
He little thinks that I,—who at his side,
Through all the roughest storms which howled across
The madly-spiteful ocean, constant stood,
And with him fought, till blood-incarnadined
The foamy sea-waves rolled,—that I it is
Who will, ere long, be lord of these bright halls,
And wear the island crown.

MONTCELLIUS.

He holds this night,
As I have learnt, in high solemnity,
His bridal banquet: gird we then our swords
Beneath the festal robe, and at a signal
Let each conspirator rush round his couch,
And stab him in his cups.

ALLECTUS.

Thou art more rash,
 Eager, and headstrong, than the battle-steed,
 That with his rider dashes on the ranks
 Ere the shrill trumpet sounds the onset peal.
 Th' important time draws near.—Possess thy soul
 In patience till our noble plot, matured,
 Pour its destruction on the pirate's head;
 As the volcano, which hath slumbered long,
 Bursts on th' affrighted world in midnight flames.

MONTCILLIUS.

My hatred to him——

ALLECTUS.

Pshaw ! thou hot-spurred youth,
 How slight thy cause for hatred to Carausius,
 Compared with mine ! Yet do I calmly hide
 My wrongs in smiles, as sunbeams gild the cloud,
 Dark with the coming tempest.

MONTCILLIUS.

Know'st thou not
 He deeply injured me ?

ALLECTUS.

Well !—has he not
 More deeply injured *me* ?—This corsair chief,
 True to his plunder-craft, th' affections stole
 Of Oriuna from me, whom I loved
 With all th' excess of measureless desire.
 He won her hand, and soon, they say, she died !—
 A veil of myst'ry hangs upon her fate—
 And certain 'tis some foul crime haunts his soul !
 Thou think'st me tardy in my bold design ;
 But know the vulture-passion of revenge
 Consumes my vitals, drinks my heart's best blood,

Till I behold our daggers in the bosom
Of this gold-sceptred spoiler!—(*Martial music.*)

But he comes.—

Withdraw awhile; we'll meet again anon.

[*Exit Montcillius.*

Vengeance! the sleep of years hast thou shook off,
And, lightning-eyed, with death-roar comest abroad,
Roused like the hungry lion from his lair,
Seeking thy fated prey!—O, how I long
To dash the slave I've served for my great purpose
From this stern bosom, and behold him stretched
With blood-choked gaspings at my feet, while I
Pluck from his brows the crown!

Flourish of trumpets. Enter Carausius in his trabea of purrple, richly embroidered with gold and gems; a crown on his head, enwreathed with laurel: a train of Slaves and Eunuchs in costly habits: Vindoma, Ardor, and other British Princes and Chiefs, attending on his state.

CARAUSIUS.

Ah, my loved friend,
The partner of my perils and my glory!
I gladly meet thee here.

ALLECTUS.

Hail to Augustus!—
Thou kingly mariner of deathless fame,
How do I joy to see thy merits crowned
With the bright circle of imperial power!
Britain, a queen among the nations, reigns,
By thee enthroned, the sovereign of the deep!

CARAUSIUS.

And reign she shall, long as this arm can wield
A sword in her defence.

ALLECTUS.

Thou hast but won
What thy deservings merit.—Long the clouds
Of Roman envy and oppression veiled
Thy rising greatness, till that warlike arm
Compelled her iron neck to bend in homage.
What joy feel I to see thy mighty genius,
Long struggling upward to these glorious heights,
Spread its bright eagle-wings, and bask in all
The dazzling splendours of imperial pomp !

CARAUSIUS.

Happy the hour my brother emperors sought,
By an assassin's hand, to take my life ;
For then my well-manned fleet from Gallia's coast
To Britain's isle, my native home, I steered ; (14)
Where a glad empire our arrival hailed
With shouts of welcoming.—Then on these brows,
With mine own hand, placed I her ocean-crown,
Swearing her independence to maintain
Against her proudest foes ; to make the deep
Crouch at her island-throne a willing vassal,
And her proud war-ships lift her banners high
In triumph o'er the world ! (15).

ALLECTUS.

There is no joy,
Of all the joys on earth, like that which fills
The soul, when we complete our long-delayed,
Long-cherished plans of glorious enterprise,
To which the mind devoted all her powers ;
Bursting those iron chains stern haughtiness

Around the ethereal wings of genius binds,
When she obscurity's dim clouds would pierce,
And soar into the heaven of bright renown.
'Tis bliss supernal to compel proud scorn
And lordly power, at last, to own our worth ;
And, trampling envy's serpents in the dust,
Break forth refulgent as the orb of day,
When the dark storm departs !—Such triumph shall,
Ere long, be mine.—Thy shadow stands between
The sun of empire and my golden hopes ;
But I will hurl thee from thy radiant sphere,
And mount the chariot of imperial glory.—(*Aside.*)

ARDOC.

I must assert, my lords, there is a pride
That yields the high-born mind a nobler joy
Than to be Cæsar—'Tis the pride of birth
And kingly lineage, from remotest time
Flowing through blood untainted.

CARAUSIUS.

Tell not me
Of kingly ancestry, or pride of birth ;—
I laugh all princely dynasties to scorn !
'Tis merit that confers nobility—
Genius deserves to wear the proudest crown,
For she alone can conquer death and time,
And win the wreath of immortality.
My chiefs are chosen from the lowest ranks,
For talent only can have weight with me ;
Their own deserts are honour's brightest badge,
Far nobler than the vain patrician pride
Derived from rotting bones.

ALLECTUS.

Those men who owe

Their power and greatness to the chance of birth,
The common accident of every day,
With borrowed light shine faintly, like the moon
When her true source of lustre is withdrawn ;
But ages roll away ere such a star
O'er time's horizon in its glory burns,
As now on Britain's happy sea-laved isle
Sheds its auspicious influence !

CARAUSIUS.

No flattery, consul,—
Such music only charms the ear of fools
And tyrants ; to an honest mariner
It sounds displeasing as the mermaid's song
That tells of coming storms.

ALLECTUS.

Rightly dost thou
My flattery figure—it foretels a storm
That soon thy bark shall wreck, whose banners flout
Proudly the winds on fortune's sun-bright sea. (*Aside.*)

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Most noble Cæsar——

CARAUSIUS.

Well, what tidings, sir ?

OFFICER.

The prince of Coritania and his daughter
Are at the palace gates, my lord, arrived.

ARDOC.

What prince of Coritania ?—By the gods,
There is no prince who can that title claim,
Save Ardoc, who before the emperor stands.

CARAUSIUS.

Caswallon, from his regal honours driven——

ARDOC.

Perished, with all his house, when Dioclesian
Commanded that the Christians should be slain
Throughout the Roman empire.

CARAUSIUS.

No—he fled ;

And with his daughter, Britain's fairest rose,
Hath in a forest-cavern dwelt concealed.
He now must to his principedom be restored——
But haste, ye chiefs, with all my courtly train,
And to our presence, with due pomp, conduct
The Augusta of the west.—(*Retires to a distance.*)

[*Exeunt Allectus, Vindoma, and Attendants.*

ARDOC.

What! must I lose

So fair a portion of my princely state ?
Shall I yield Coritania to this chief,
A hated Christian ?—Curses on his head !
Which the dark grave, I thought, had pillowed long :
And now he comes, as from the dead, to claim
My just inheritance.—I must withdraw
Awhile to cool this rage !—

[*Exit.*

CARAUSIUS.

Prince of the North,

We have been deeply pondering how thy loss
Of Coritania——Ha, what gone ?—Yes, yes,
To welcome his long-absent brother-chief,
As one risen from the grave.—The grave !—O, why,
Dark prison-house, dost thou so oft yield up
Thy ghastly tenants to appal our sight,
And make the stoutest heart with terror quail ?—

The grave!—No grave hadst thou!—
Thou wanderest on the shores of Charon's flood,
Perturbed vision, seeking rest in vain!—
Thou hadst no funeral rites, no mournful lay,
Save thine own shrieks and howls of stormy wave,
As o'er thy head, ill-fated Oriuna,
The wild Atlantic rushed! The foamy surge
Was made thy winding-sheet, and the dark rocks
That lie amid the deep, thy watery bier!
Sleep'st thou where the great serpent coils his folds,
And loathsome monsters haunt? or have the winds
And billows hurled thy tombless bones to blanch
On some far distant isle's bright palmy shore?—
I know not—but, pale, fearful spirit, thou
Seem'st always with me!—Hence, unreal shadow!
Shriek not, dread spectre, o'er my nuptial couch,
To fright my lovely bride!—

Enter a band of Ambubagæ, or Syrian maids, playing on flutes (16); then a train of Virgins strewing flowers, Caswallon, leading Malwina, followed by Allectus, Vindoma, Princes, Chiefs, and Soldiers, with Eagles and Banners.—Caswallon and Malwina kneel to the Emperor. (17)

CARAUSIUS.

Welcome, sweet maid,
Child of the desert, to these splendid halls
Of Cæsar's palace.—Rise, and let me pay
Glad homage to thy beauty.—Hadst thou stood
Before Apelles thus, with brighter charms
His Venus, rising from the love-soothed waves,
Would have the world enchanted!—Through those eyes
A soul of purity, all radiant, shines;

The rose of morn is damask'd on that cheek,
And from thy lips of ruby innocence
Joy breaks in sunny smiles. Here shalt thou reign
The imperial partner of our sea-girt throne.

MALWINA.

Lord of the deep, and sovereign of the west,
Malwina merits not such proud distinction.

CARAUSIUS.

Thou merit'st all an emperor can bestow.
Not the famed warrior of the Grecian host
Laid at his captive's feet his laurel crown
With such fond ardour of devoted love,
As I now feel to offer thee the spoils
Of land and wave, won bravely by this arm
When my triumphant fleets rode o'er the deep,
Guarding the imperial provinces of Rome
From the bold ocean-rovers of the North. (18)
Ye Celtic chiefs, and princes of our isle,
Be witness that I take this lovely maid
For my fair empress-bride.—Britain no more
Shall to a foreign power in bondage bow;
Her island-gem from Rome's imperial crown,
Beyond all others valued, we have plucked,
And on this regal maiden's brows will bind
The inestimable prize.

VINDOMA.

I, in the name
Of these my brother chieftains of this isle,
Before thee kneel our homage to renew,
Emperor of land and sea; while joy o'erflows
Our grateful hearts, that for thy spouse thou takest
A princess of the Cymry's legal line.
Britain, with shouts of gladness, lifts her voice

To hail Carausius and his lovely bride
The Augustus and Augusta of the west !

(Flourish of trumpets, shouts, &c.)

CASWALLON.

O, what a tide of rapture floods my soul,
To see my forest-child, amid this throng
Of princely chiefs, the sovereign of her people !

CARAUSIUS.

Thrice happy Britain's billow-circled isle,
That laughs the might of haughty Rome to scorn,
And in whose naval power the eternal city
Shall, trembling on her seven proud hills with fear,
A second Carthage find which ne'er will fall !

CASWALLON.

No, she with each succeeding age shall rise
In still increasing glory.

CARAUSIUS.

From the coasts
Of storm-beat Scandia to the sunny shores
Of Bosphorus our mighty fleets command
The subject-ocean ; and the Saxon kings,
With all their roving barques, my galleys join.
The conquered chiefs of Caledonia's land,
And the fierce Picts, are now our firm allies ; (19)
While those wild hordes of lawless mountaineers,
That overran Brigantium's ravaged plains,
Beyond Gal-Sever's barrier-lines are driven.
And now that noble work of Roman power
Stands a new wonder of the admiring world,
Stretching o'er moorland, vale, and cloud-girt hill,
In all its castled strength, from sea to sea !
There, on its ramparts flash the guards' bright spears
From watch to watch, and wave my red-gold banners,

The savage inroads of the north defying ! (20)
Peace dwells within our borders.—Thou, good prince,
The father of our empress, shalt to all
Thy regal dignities be now restored ;
And every chief, meet to his rank, receive
Gift-tokens of our love.

CASWALLON.

Right noble Cæsar,
Words fail to express my grateful thanks, as thus
I bow in homage to thy sovereign power.

CARAUSIUS.

Ye princes, who to our imperial state
Due service yield, we at the spousal feast
Again, ere long, will meet, and when are done
The bridal rites, we'll lift our wine-cups high,
And quaff to Britain's glory copious measures.

[*Grand flourish, exeunt—Manens Allectus.*

ALLECTUS.

Ah, injured Oriuna ! why didst thou
The fondness of this faithful heart reject,
For him who——O, it maddens me to think
What may have been thy fate !—him who now weds
Another for ambition ?—Why, with thee
A shepherd's life in some sequestered vale,
I had preferred to all the power of kings.
Deprived of thy loved sun-smiles, which to me
Had brighter been than empire's brightest pomp !
But these soft thoughts befit not my stern mood :
Dominion and revenge fill all my soul !
And here comes one who, by his gloomy port,
Seems a fit instrument to aid my purpose.

U

Enter Ardoc.

Thou look'st displeased—what ails thee, noble prince?
What hath the Augustus done to move thy spleen?

ARDOC.

Augustus dost thou call this base brigand?
Who from a slave-mart hath himself upraised,
By daring robberies, to dishonest fame,
And grasped, with lawless power, the imperial crown!
What have I uttered?—Treason! doubtless treason!
For thou art this bold ocean rover's friend.

ALLECTUS.

Sure thou art bold to speak in Cæsar's court
Thus to his honoured consul, who stands next
In state and dignity; but though thy warmth
And open heart have hurried thee beyond
The bounds of prudence, thou art safe with me.
Truly to speak, I hate him deeper far
Than thou canst do—I have much greater cause.
But what has moved thy choler thus, my friend?

ARDOC.

Moved me?—Does he not treat me with contempt?
A low-born spoiler!—Me! a prince whose blood
Flows from the first of Celtic chiefs who gave
This isle a name among the ancient kingdoms!
Patience, ye gods!—These Roman consuls, who
The lineal dignity of princes scorn,
Surpass them far in pomp and insolence!

ALLECTUS.

And is this treatment thy sole ground for hate?

ARDOC.

No!—He of half my sovereignty intends
To strip me, and restore the provinces

Of Coritania to my Christian foe.
Because, forsooth, this old man of the woods
A daughter hath, whose dainty form it seems
Is all bewitching in the pirate's eyes.

ALLECTUS.

Hast thou not heard how brave Marc Antony,
Thrall'd by an idle woman, lost the world?—
And this Carausius may his empire lose
For such another toy.

ARDOC.

Let him—but I

Will not, by the great image of Mongontus! (21)
Be fooled of my fair kingdom through the arts
Of a young forest wanton.—No! I'll quit
This robber's palace ere yon sun-god sets
Amid the crimson splendours of the west,
And to Caer Conan's regal tower return; (22)
There, round my standard call Brigantia's chiefs,
The bravest warriors found in Britain's land.

ALLECTUS.

Well, and what then?

ARDOC.

I'll from the prince who rules

Sea-girt Minavia, (23) and those warlike kings
That in the green isle of Yverdhon reign, (24)
Which never the proud foot of Roman trod,
Speedy assistance seek;—then shall the flames
Of a rebellion o'er the north rush forth
That will consume this pirate!——

ALLECTUS.

No—not him—

But thee, and all thy followers, as the blaze
Of tempest-clouds the shepherd's reedy hut

To ashes turns, far scattered by the winds.
The wolf, though famished, from the lion's jaw
Dares not to snatch his prey.

ARDOC.

And darest thou deem

Me courageless in battle-hour?——

ALLECTUS.

No, prince ;—

A heart hast thou as dauntless in thy bosom
As this Carausius, or the bravest born.
But nor in field, nor on the ocean-surge
Has ever chief been found who from his brows
Could pluck the wreaths of victory.—Let the lustre
Of his proud triumphs be a beacon-light
To warn thee of that fatal rock on which
The wild swell of thy wrath is bearing thee,
There to be wrecked and sunk !—Now mark me, prince,
I learn, the emperors, from my spies at Rome,
Still jealous of Carausius, are resolved
The tide of battle on this isle to pour,
And hurl their rival from the imperial throne.
But in this court are chiefs with me collegued,
Who trust not to the doubtful chance of war
For the fulfilment of their just revenge.
The tyrant's doom draws near ! for we have sworn
Before the altar, in his blood to dip
Our hotly-eager weapons !——Dark-browed chief,
Come join with us—thou shalt the Cassius be
Of our firm union.—'Tis the noblest plot
That ever o'er a city's midnight towers
The crimson flames of conflagration flung !

ARDOC.

But how ?—and when ?—and where ?

ALLECTUS.

Our plans are yet
Not ripe for execution.—Die he shall!—
Perhaps, like Cæsar, where the senate meets,
Or in the bath, or on the bridal couch—
As best befits our glorious enterprise.
That deed achieved, I mount the imperial throne,
And thou o'er Coritania shalt be king, (25)
E'en to the tower-crowned ramparts of the north.
Hence!—raise thy banner; gather valiant men—
I'll tell the emperor they are needed here
To guard the southern coast. (26)

ARDOC.

A gallant plot!
Give me thy hand, and take a warrior's grasp—
The cordial grasp of honest fellowship.
Thou soon shalt see what a brave host I'll bring,
With swords and hearts devoted to our cause. [*Exit.*]

ALLECTUS.

Thus do I make the passions of weak men
The steps by which to climb that lofty height
Where glory and dominion wait to wreath
Their sunbeams round these brows!—O, when I lost
My Oriuna, hidden sorrow quelled
My spirit to its slavery.—I became
Torpid and frozen, till revenge awoke,
And bright ambition rushed upon my soul,
In splendour vivifying all her powers!
So stand the iron waves of Bothnia's gulph,
Smote by the wintry blast, where not a sound
Amid its dismal solitudes is heard,
Save the keen tempest howling round the peaks
And icy ridges of that dark, dead sea,

A scoffer at its deep unbroken silence ;
Till, hastening from the south, the lord of day
Melts those rock-billows with his radiant smile ;—
Then dips her plumes the sea-bird in the flood,
And there again spreads her white sails the barque,
Filled with the breezes of young laughing spring !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Palace.*

Enter Carausius.

CARAUSIUS.

WHY must I still be dogged and haunted thus?
Are there no charms to drive this vision hence?
Can it be real?—'Tis remorse that fools us
With a strange mockery of mortality,
Making what is not seem as if it were.

Enter Allectus.

Timely dost thou approach :—weighed down am I,
Despite my lofty state, with secret grief.
Fain would I this long-burthened soul relieve,
And make thee sharer of her inmost thoughts.—

(*A pause.*)

ALLECTUS.

Why then hangs silence on thy faltering lips?—
Have I not, prince, through all thy bright career,
Beside thee stood? have I not fought and bled
In thy great cause, and urged thee on to glory?
Till with her trump, that pealed from shore to shore,
Renown thy name hath shouted, and in power
Thou stand'st above the world, like yonder sun,
Rich in his boundless wealth of golden light!
Am I not worthy, then, to share thy griefs,
And know thy bosomed secrets?

CARAUSIUS.

Yes, Allectus,

I will the veil of shame pluck from this heart,
Though horror freeze thy life-streams into ice,
When thou shalt on its naked blackness look,
Circled with blood-gorged adders of remorse!

ALLECTUS.

What qualms of priest-ridden conscience move thee
now?

Have we so long been corsairs on the deep,
Familiarized with scenes of blood and plunder,
To start at any deed which thirst of power,
Honour, and wealth, might tempt us to perform?
I am not used to tremble at a tale
Of murder, or of spectres, like a maid
When she some beldam's midnight legend hears.

CARAUSIUS.

No deed of blood, save in the battle's rage,
E'er stained this hand; but O, there is a deed,
A savage deed of death, which mars my peace,
And frights the balmy slumber from my couch!
Well didst thou know my wife, my Oriuna——

ALLECTUS.

Yes, mighty Cæsar——Would I never had,
Or thou hadst never won her from these arms. (*Aside.*)

CARAUSIUS.

How happy was I in her virtuous love,
Till a false friend, a most pernicious caitiff,
(Become my foe, for some pretended wrong
Which I had done him) by his specious wiles
Wrought on my unsuspecting mind, and I
Grew mad with jealousy!—His arts produced
Such damning proofs, that not a doubt remained,

In my distracted bosom, of her crime !
O, by that demon set in secret watch,
I fancied that I saw her paramour
Come from her midnight chamber ! Then, convulsed
With frenzied passion, vowed I dire revenge !—
On Gallia's western shore there lies a rock
Which, at the tide's low ebb, the watery veil
Flings from its dark and seaweed-covered brows.
At dead of night from my once happy home
I led my wife, and, taking her on board
A light chaloupe, in silence o'er the waves
Steered to that fatal rock !—Ha ! thou turn'st pale.

ALLECTUS.

By Hercules, I do, indeed, now feel
An icy coldness creep through all my veins !—
How ends the tale ?

CARAUSIUS.

In vengeance, death, and murder !
I landed her upon that little isle,
Round which, with wolfish howlings for their prey,
The rampant surges gathered, as the winds
Came wrathful o'er the sea.—There to her fate
I left her with my curses !—Her sad cries
For mercy o'er the midnight ocean rang ;
But I no mercy felt !—Her last wild shrieks,
When the returning tide around her rose,
Came by me on the storm, as far away
The flashing billows bore me ; but I laughed,
Fiendlike, with joy, till came no more the wail
Or struggle-cry from that wave-covered rock !

ALLECTUS.

Thou hell-born monster !—Ha, I have no sword,
Or I should plunge it in thy murderous heart !—

But I must calm this passion——Down, fierce rage—
Thy hour, revenge, draws near. (*Aside.*)

CARAUSIUS.

I see thou art struck
With horror at poor Oriuna's fate.
Ah, didst thou know my guilt-tormented feelings!—
Wolf-like remorse, with quenchless thirst of blood,
Preys ever here!

ALLECTUS.

Nay, my loved, gallant friend,
This is no time to think upon the past
With vain regret.—Who shall your vengeance blame?

CARAUSIUS.

Not blame?—why, she was innocence itself!
As he, the exciter of my fury, proved,
With demon scoff and mockery, when I told
The savage deed I had done,—who, when he saw
The horrors I endured, shouted with joy
That his revenge was won!

ALLECTUS.

Didst thou permit
The wretch a moment's breath for prayer to heaven?

CARAUSIUS.

No! for I buried in his fiendish heart
My sword e'en to the hilt!—That was a deed
Of justice to the injured!—Leaving him
Blood-weltering on the shore, I then embarked
On board my fleet, and roamed the rolling seas.
But peace or joy this heart ne'er since hath known!
When storms had passed, and sunbeams showered with
gold
The wreck-concealing deep, which sunk to rest,
Like a gorged monster slumbering o'er his prey,

Still was she with me!—In the thunder-strife
Of battle, and at night's soft hour, when sat
Moon-lighted silence on the glittering waters,
Her shadow, pale and cold as snowy cloud,
Beside me stood ; and when my harassed frame
Snatched brief repose, she haunted all my dreams !
Nor found I refuge in the noisy wrath
Of wrestling elements—for still there came
Shrieks as of one who struggled hard with death,
And gaspings of despair, which rose and sunk,
Then rose again more loud and fearful still !
Nor could the tempest, with its demon howl,
Those cries of anguish drown !

ALLECTUS.

O, may they ring
Eternal in thine ears !—(*Aside.*)

CARAUSIUS.

Ha ! here again !
Yes, I behold her pale and sea-drench'd form !—
Look, where she stands !—This tale hath called thee up
From the dark ocean-depths !—O, for a spell
To bind thee in the Atlantic's lowest gulfs,
Where storm-winds ne'er were heard !—Avaunt, dim
shade !

Hence from my sight !—O, thou wilt drive me mad !
(*Rushes off distractedly.*)

ALLECTUS.

At last I've won the fatal secret from him,
Which makes thy deadly cup, Revenge, o'erflow !
Carausius, thou shalt drain it to the dregs !—
But I, to make my purpose sure, must work
This murderer's ruin darkly—like the wind
That, rushing o'er the sea unseen, though felt,

Dashes on foam-spread rock the gallant barque,
Round which the liquid mountains clash in thunder,
And, battling with the breakers as she sinks,
The storm her death-hymn yells with maniac joy! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*The inside of a rocky Cavern on the Durotrigian Coast, a Lamp burning in the centre—a Storm without.*

Dungarth and Ruthinia discovered, in habits of wolf-skins, at a frugal repast.

RUTHINIA.

Happy am I the tempest's dirge-like voice
Roused not the deep to wrath ere you, my prince,
In safety reached the shore.

DUNGARTH.

Ah, have I not,
Ruthinia, oft forbid thy tongue to use
That title to an outcast wretch like me?
Driven from my father's shield-hung halls of power
To hide myself in this rude ocean-cave,
And, as a fisher, on the sounding seas
Our daily pittance gain.—Ill-spoken title!
O, it calls up my wrongs, my burning wrongs,
That sting my soul to madness!

RUTHINIA.

Pardon me—
I did not, Dungarth, mean to raise a thought
Of what thou hast endured——

DUNGARTH.

I, the late chief
Of brave Damnonia, by the Imperial Pirate

Was from my palace and my kingdom driven,
Because I scorned to be a titled slave,
And ask his leave to reign.—Yet, not content
With that injustice, the base dog, his tribune,
In presence of the scoffing Roman legions,
Bound me with thongs, and on my naked back
Inflicted bloody stripes ! Scourged, like a felon,
I then was driven without the Roman camp,
To hide my infamy in woods and caves,
Like a wild, savage beast !

RUTHINIA.

Alas, my Dungarth !
What a heart-piercing sight was that to me !
I wept, and knelt, and prayed, but all in vain—
Nothing could move that flinty-bosomed chief.

DUNGARTH.

O, but for one short hour of stern revenge,
This Pirate-king in battle-van to meet,
With all his Roman dogs that mocked my shame !
But hope is gone—or my brave friend, Dhu Cadern,
Ere this had to our sea-beat cave returned
With news of some revolt.

RUTHINIA.

Then be resigned
To what the gods ordain—More sweet to me
This simple pittance which thy labour draws,
Though gained in danger, from the sounding deep ;
More dear this foam-besprinkled cavern, wreathed
With sea-weed garlands, than the splendid feasts
And gorgeous pride of Cæsar's golden halls.
For here, with thee, I love to sit, and list
The vesper-music of the ocean, when,
In gentle mood, he wakes a solemn hymn

To his bright queen of waters, as she comes
In cloud-pomp forth, with crimson blush, to fling
Her beauty on the darkness of his bosom,
Which her mild beams, like love for love, reflects.
And pleasant, Dungarth, 'tis, with thee, to hear,
As I do now, in this our sheltered cave,
The voice of wrathful sea-gods, from the depths
Loud shouting to the tempest.—Smooth thy brow ;
We are more happy here than Cæsar is
Amid the glittering courtiers and proud guards
Of his imperial halls. (27)

DUNGARTH.

Thy words are vain,
Though kindly meant to soothe my dreary exile—
No beams of joy through those foul clouds of shame
That rest so darkly on me e'er will break
Till great revenge is mine !—That wolfish yell,
That shout of mockery, and that hiss of scorn,
Which from those Romans came, as through their camp,
Smarting with wounds, and covered with my blood,
I passed, in agonies of shame and rage,
Still ring in my distracted ears, and pluck
Reason and patience from their seat within
This tempest-troubled bosom !—All is here
Frenzy, and desperation, and revenge !—

(Storm increases.)

RUTHINIA.

Alas, my husband ! do not thus give way
To such wild gusts of passion—O, 'tis like
The wreckful storm without.—A time may come
To give thee triumph o'er thy ruthless foes.

DUNGARTH.

When ? when ?—No, Time has not one hour for me

That in his gloomy pilgrimage shall beam
Resplendent with the glory of my vengeance !
All here is dark, and stormy as yon sea !

(Laying his hand on his bosom.)

Thou spokest right truly—the wild elements
Are like my wounded spirit.—

Rage on in all your cloud-compelling wrath,
Ye houseless and unruly winds, that seem
Fit emblem of my state ; now sound aloud
Your trumpet-voices in the Corsair's ear,
And howl forth my deep wrongs !—unseat the rocks,
Down hurl the lofty tower upon its dwellers,
And the time-hallowed spectre oak that dares, (28)
Proud of its strength, to wrestle with your might !—
Up, and be stirring in thy noisy work
Of wreck and death, thou fiercely-passionate sea,
And let the mast-boy's dying shrieks be heard
In the brief pauses of thy cataract roar !
And thou, terrific Bera, thunder-spirit, (29)
Who, cloud-o'ershadowed, on the mountains dwellest,
Lift up thy voice, and as thou send'st abroad
Thy thousand death-flames, those swift messengers
Of vengeance on the guilty, bid them dash
The palace-towers of Cæsar to the ground,
And, falcon-like, spread their blue quivering wings
Above his head,—then smite him to the heart !

RUTHINIA.

Forbear, in pity, Dungarth, O forbear !
Thy words, like dark enchantments, raise the storms
To an unearthly fury !—Hark !—O, gods !
Be merciful unto us ! what sad shriek
Was that which o'er yon dashing breakers came ?—
Dim, cloud-veiled ghosts are on the hollow blast,

Moaning with doleful voice, and tempest-spirits,
Kings of the elements, with lightning eyes,
Sweep o'er the foamy-vaulting surge, and chant
The mariner's dismal death-song!—
List!—what a dreadful crash!—and now again
Comes that shrill shriek of woe!

DUNGARTH.

Ruthinia, 'tis
No spirit's voice, but cry of drowning wretches.
Some bark is on the rocks of Muope dashed.
I'll forth—not for base plunder, but to lend my aid,
And succour the distressed. [Exit.]

RUTHINIA.

The gods preserve thee!
Ah, he has still a noble, kindly heart!—
But when the past comes o'er his gloomy thoughts,
The cloud of madness rolls across his brow.
O, if one hopeless being yet remain,
Tossed on the shivered fragments of the wreck,
Ye lightning spirits, rend the veil of night,
And from the sea snatch darkness as ye fly
Across the stormy terrors of its wrath,
That Dungarth may behold and timely aid
The sinking sufferer.

Enter Dungarth, bearing Oriuna in his arms.

Thanks, ye gods! he's safe!
Think'st thou there's life in this poor sea-drenched form?

DUNGARTH.

I saw her standing, wild in agony,
By the red lightning, on the shattered barque,
And, plunging through the breakers, reached the wreck

Just as a mountain billow swept her off
Into the troubled deep.—The rest have perished !

RUTHINIA.

O yes, she lives !—her eyelids move—soft !—raise her.

ORIUNA.

And am I still alive ?—Have I escaped
Death, whose terrific eye shot lightning gleams
Athwart the frightful gloom, whose thunder voice
In the dark whirlwind roared ?—Yes, I am safe !—
I feel I am—though still I hear the storm.—
Twice from the raging deep have I been snatched,
In peril's darkest hour !—Ha, my preserver !—
To thee I owe my life !—Take thou these chains
Of burnished gold, and these resplendent gems,
Too poor a gift for thy heroic daring.

DUNGARTH.

Though poor am I e'en as the poorest slave,
I want no gaudy trappings or rich gems ;
They do not now befit my abject state.
Fully am I repaid in having saved
So fair a lady's life—nay, keep them all ;
Keep them, I say, for better purposes.

ORIUNA.

Thy words are gentle, though thy garb is rude :
Thou hast seen better days ?

DUNGARTH.

No matter, lady—

My days of brightness long have been departed,
And all to come are full of dark despair !
No more of this.—You needs must want repose—
Take thou the lady to our inner cave. (To Ruthinia.)

ORIUNA.

Nay, good my friend, the clouds begin to break,

And on thy path gleams fortune's rising sun,
For thou hast from a watery tomb preserved
The wife of thy liege emperor.

DUNGARTH.

My emperor !—ha, ha, ha !
I know no emperor that hath rule o'er me !—
Lady, of whom speak you ?

ORIUNA.

Strange man !—Canst thou,
A dweller of this isle, that question ask ?—
I speak of great Carausius, he who sways,
O'er land and sea, the sceptre of the west,
Thy sovereign lord !

DUNGARTH.

No lord is he o'er me :
Go bid the lion at his footstool crouch,
The leopard lick the dust beneath his feet ;
But think not I will bend my neck to him
Whose name my soul abhors !—No ! I will live,
Long as this heart that loves my native land
Beats in my bosom, free as the wild bull
And kingly elk, that range the forest bowers,
And be at least the monarch of myself !

ORIUNA.

Why, haughty man ! darest thou rebel against
That conqueror who defied the world's proud lords,
And wrested from their grasp this queen of isles !
Think'st thou thy puny arm can match his strength,
Or reach the dazzling heights of his renown ?—
As easily the hermit owl might dash
The warrior sun-bird from the blaze of day,
As thou oppose Carausius !

DUNGARTH.

Let me meet

This victor breast to breast, and sword to sword ;
And if I offer not his blood to th' gods,
Whose curses I upon his head invoke
With all the maledictions of dark spirits
That fling the lightning and the plague abroad
To blast mankind, then may his battle steeds
Trample me in the dust, and o'er these limbs
His chariot drive in triumph !

RUTHINIA.

I entreat

That thou wilt, Dungarth, calm this frantic mood.

DUNGARTH.

How can I, wife, be calm ?—The very name
Of this Carausius in my soul awakes
Feelings of madness !

ORIUNA.

Gloomy-visaged slave !

Let me pass from thy cavern——

DUNGARTH.

Slave !—Ye shades,

The glorious spirits of my great forefathers,
Can ye hear this, and from your midnight clouds
Forbear, in all your meteor pomp, to rush
And shame this woman ?—My brave country's sons
Were never slaves, till Roman tyrants set
Their proud feet on these shores—blood-wolves, whose
sires
Were lawless thieves, when mine were free-born kings !

ORIUNA.

Kings !—thou, a wretched serf, the son of kings !

Enter Dhu Cadern.

DUNGARTH.

Welcome, Dhu Cadern !—Glad am I to see thee !
What tidings bring'st thou from Damnonia's land ?

DHU CADERN.

Great news, my gracious lord.

DUNGARTH.

Great I perceive,
By the bright flashing of thy joy-lit eye.—
Lady, you pass not here—you are my prisoner !

ORIUNA.

Thy prisoner, insolent !—Have I been saved
From the wild fury of the deep to be
The prey of some fierce robber ?

DUNGARTH.

No ; thou art
The lawful captive of an honest man.
The title of a robber I fling back
On thy base husband, that wild corsair, who
Plundered the roving plunderers of the sea,
But ne'er returned the booty to its owners,
And who, with matchless impudence, at last
Stole from the master-robbers of the world
A third part of their empire !——Lead, Ruthinia,
The pirate's wife within the interior cave.

ORIUNA.

Thou may'st repent this outrage, daring man,
To me who am thine empress.

[Exeunt Ruthinia and Oriuna.]

DUNGARTH.

Now thy tale.

DHU CADERN.

The western tribes and the Morini too (31)
Are up in arms, impatient of the yoke
The imperial pirate on their necks hath laid,
Hating the chief placed o'er them.—They rejoice
That thou art still alive, and call thee forth
From this thy hiding-place again to be
Their prince and leader.—Warlike bands are met
To attack Iscalia and Caer Ruth's strong towers, (32)
Those cities of the Romans; and the Cangi (33)
Join the revolt, that spreads on every side
Like lightning round the storm-clouds!

DUNGARTH.

Thou indeed

Bring'st glorious news!—We'll journey hence at morn
To the hill city of my ancient sires,
Duncarmo's mountain-fort, which never yet
Has by the accursed Romans been profaned.
My dragon banners of defiance there
I'll to the winds unfurl, and join my powers
With the brave Cangi!—Yon proud lady, too,
That would-be empress, shall with us depart.
The wife of this sea-robber is my slave!
A prize that gives bright earnest of success!

DHU CADERN.

How came she here?

DUNGARTH.

On yonder surge-lashed rocks
The bark which bore her to these shores was wrecked;
I snatched her from the billows.

DHU CADERN.

Thou hast won

A victory in her capture, ere thy sword
Hath from its scabbard flashed!

DUNGARTH.

Yes, the dark night

Of my despair, like yonder wailing storm,
Is fast departing from me, and the gleams
Of vengeance and of glory through the clouds
Are redly breaking !—Liberty's bright sun
Arises on my people, and its beams
From shore to shore shall goldenly outspread !
We'll rouse, like Boadicea, once again
All Britain to the noble gallant work
Of freedom and revenge !—Thy trump shall sound,
O Liberty ! throughout the joyous land,
And waken every British heart to glory !

DHU CADERN.

I trust the time approaches when these eyes
Shall see the flames ascend from Roman cities,
And all their splendour turned to heaps of dust !—
Down with their marble palaces and halls,
And covered temples, filled with glittering pomp,
Where on their pictured floors, with mincing step,
They delicately walk and dance along
To mellow flutes and organ-pipes, that breathe
Enchanted strains of witchery ; where they lie, (34)
Luxurious slaves ! at banquet tables, heaped
With gold and silver vessels, on rich beds
Of ivory and purple, while their brows
And sparkling cups are crowned with rosy flowers,
And aromatic odours round them burn
In vases that with rainbow splendours gleam. (35)
Curst be the effeminate dogs !

DUNGARTH—(*not heeding him*).

Yes, I perceive
The hour draws near.—Britain again shall have

Her king of kings, born of the ancient blood,
The Celtic lineage of her native chiefs,
And Freedom bind her sun-wreaths round his brows.

DHU CADERN.

I'd rather share the wolf's dark bone-strewed den,
Or on his heathy bed with th' elk lie down ;—
I'd rather pluck her quarry from the eagle,
And with the stern bear feed,—than sleep beneath
Their gilded roofs, or at their costly feasts
Loll in unmanly pomp, like a soft maid,
On dainty beds, perfumed with flowers and scents.

DUNGARTH.

I'll to the hallowed tomb of that great chief
Rinvala, godlike father of our line ;
And from his bony grasp the magic sword,
That thunderbolt of war, seize dauntlessly !
'Tis prophesied by Druid-seers of old
That he who from the tomb his clymore takes
Shall sever Britain's iron yoke of bondage,
And set his country free !

DHU CADERN.

O, if we win

The glorious day, these strangers and their arts
Shall all be rooted out !—I'd crucify
The wizard-authors of those magic crafts
That make their gilded palaces more bright
Than e'en th' enchanted halls where fairies hold
Their midnight sports, and, like th' Icenian queen,
Give their voluptuous pomps to feed the flames !

DUNGARTH.

No, no, Dhu Cadern, 'tis their proud ambition,
And not their arts, which has enslaved my country.

DHU CADERN.

I hate their fopperies, ostentatious shows,
And boundless pride.—Our once bold, warlike youth
Are grown debased by Rome's pernicious manners,
And copy all her arts and soft refinements. (36)
Look, look, my lord, the skies are wrapped in fire !
A thousand meteors rush o'er yonder clouds,
Quivering and glowing with ethereal lights,
Like sunset splendours !—See, what warrior hosts,
Of dazzling limb, with arms of rainbow dyes,
Come in their glory forth ! their flashing spears
O'er all the northern arch refulgence shed.
Mark how the bannered ranks shine out, then fade,
In the pale dimness of the passing mist.

DUNGARTH.

Dhu Cadern, 'tis an omen from the gods.
Britain, thy change approaches, and the fall
Of tyranny draws nigh !—Ere Rome was struck
By Boadicea's spear, 'tis said that earth
And heaven gave warning ! that our fathers' ghosts
Shrieked in her palaces, and prophets ran
Wildly about the streets, shouting her doom. (37)
Behold ! with sanguine floods the heavens are stained !
And the pale remnant of those airy forms,
With riven banner and war-shivered arms,
Fade in their flight away—So shall thy power
And far-spread glory, Rome, in darkness sink,
Like yonder dreamy pomp of spirit-shapes,
And plague the world no more !

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A series of splendid Cœnacula, or grand banquetting-rooms, opening one beyond the other, in the palace of Sorbiodunum. A magnificent banquet prepared in all the profusion of Roman voluptuousness. Statues of the gods, and enormous salt-holders of massy silver, placed along the centre of the tables, covered with various dishes of gold, urns inlaid with gems, and Etruscan vases of exquisite workmanship, filled with beautiful flowers. Couches of ivory, covered with purple and scarlet, embroidered with gold.*

Carausius, Allectus, and Malwina are discovered on an elevated throne or couch, surrounded with superb hangings. Caswallon, Montcillius, Vindoma, with other British Princes, Ladies, and Chiefs of various nations, fill the couches. Groups of Celtic Bards, in their parti-coloured robes and hoods, leaning on their harps. War-dancers and Gladiators in splendid armour. A band of Ambubaiaë, with flutes and timbrels, and bells on their ankles, are discovered dancing. Carausius waves his hand, and they cease, when other females, with garlands of flowers, join in the *Saltatio Pyrrhica*, or war-dance, with a band of Roman Knights, to the martial airs of trumpets and horns.

CARAUSIUS.

RETIRE—and let our British bards advance,
And to the harp a spirit-stirring lay

Of other days rehearse.—We love to hear
The Celtic war-song, or the sounding lyre
Roll its deep music, like the cataract-flood.
Famed harpers of the holy hill of bards,
The halls of song, the city of the sun,
Well are ye skilled to touch the hallowed chords,
And waken those wild melodies of glory
That rang where steel-clad warriors met of old,
With battle wearied, at the feast of shells. (38)

DUAN, BY THE BARDS.

Dark was the hour, nor moon nor star
 Glanced on the rolling deep,
As in his might the strong-armed son of war
 Roused his fierce legions from their sleep,
 Couched on Morinia's rocky strand,
 Battle to wage in Britain's unknown land ;
 Where the departed spirits rest,
The home of shadows, blessed isles o' the west. (39)

Deeply then the weapon-clang,
 Neigh of war-horse, trumpet-call,
O'er the midnight ocean rang, (40)
 Mingled with the dying fall
Of the ground-sea's distant roar,
And lofty galley's splashing oar ;
With tramp of hosts in war-array,
Eager to mix in bloody fray,
And creek of hoisted sail, and cry
Of sea-boy 'mid the shrouds on high, (41)
The clang of wakened ocean-fowl,
And prowling wolf's death-snuffing howl.

Then glanced to torch-light, far and near,
Steely cuirass, shield, and spear ;
Blazoned banner's purple fold,
And thunder-bird with plumes of gold.
Hark ! ascends the shout on high,
While the deep echoing cliffs reply,
As the last warrior quits the strand,
And climbs the flower-wreathed (42) deck the rear-
ward band.

Anchors are weighed, the lessening lights reveal
The seaward-moving fleet ; the trumpet-peal
And soldiers' shouts, scarce heard upon the wind,
Proclaim Gaul's midnight coast left far behind.
On, on the galleys steer. With anxious eye
Stands on the deck proud Cæsar, to descry,
'Mid dawn's white mists, the whiter cliffs arise
Of Albion, towering in the shadowy skies.
A new and unknown world ! where he a name
Immortal hopes t' achieve, and deathless fame,
That shall a triumph win at Rome, and be
A prelude to th' imperial dignity.

Now all the rosy richness of the morn
Bursts o'er the heavens, and brilliant dyes adorn
The golden-billowed deep, while cloud-formed isles
Rise from the ruby wave, bright with Aurora's smiles.
Then, as the silver mists slow rolled away,
Which hung along the eastern verge of day,
Shone Albion's gleamy summits bold,
With banner crowned and rampart-hold.
Shouts at the sight arose on high,
Like thunders gathering round the sky,

From galley, bark, and brigantine,
Which to the rising sunbeams flashed
With brazen prows, and oars that dashed
Aside the foamy, sparkling brine.

But as the war-ships onward steer,
Myriads of rays glance far and near,
From shield and breastplate, sword and spear !
For on Britannia's cliffs and strands
Unnumbered hosts in arms are seen,
With horsemen ranged in threatening bands, (43)
And warlike chariots rushing on between ;
While, as the astonished Romans gaze,
Rock, hill, and shore are one vast armour-blaze.

Now martial coil, and din, and combat-yell resound !
Th' invader pours his stranger bands,
And plants his eagle ensigns on the sands.
Legions on legions rush !—
Shields clash on shields, horsemen on horsemen bound !
Armour rings,
The war-steed flings
His rider to the ground—
And o'er the strand the crimson blood-streams gush !

With blood the headlong billows froth,
And lash th' encrimsoned rocks, as wroth
That Rome's slave-banners are unfurled
On Liberty's sea-guarded world.
Carcass, and galley-wreck, with shivered shield and
spear,
Chariot, and struggling steed, and charioteer,
Around each battle-riven file,
Dying for their own dear-loved isle,

On ocean float—that mingles with the rout,
Drowning the stern-souled warrior's shout.

Hark! how the scythe-wheeled cars roll on in thunder!
Their drivers' skill in fight is Cæsar's fear and wonder!

And forward still the gallant Britons dash,
To the chariot-drum and the cymbal-clash.
Still as in Freedom's cause they fall,
Fresh squadrons rush at glory's call!
The arrows hiss in cloudy flight,
The red shore flames with armour-light;
Groan, and shout, and victor-cry,
Blend with the yell of those who fly;
Earth trembles with the battle-shock,
And Ocean howls along his shores of everlasting rock!

But who that day, amid the strife,
The noblest palm of knighthood won? (44)
It was Cathmorna's gallant son,
Who for his country bravely gave his life.
In warfare's brightest lists renowned,
Dunalbion met th' invader's host,
And stretched cold on th' ensanguined ground
Rome's proudest chiefs, her strength and boast!
But vain his skill as charioteer,
And vain, alas! his far-famed might—
He fell by Cæsar's thirsty spear,
And closed his eyes in endless night!

Ah, who is she, so pale, so fair,
With flowing robe and golden hair,
Wandering with fearful step among
The sea-strand's ghastly, gory throng?

She listens—but no sound, save ocean's roar,
Is on the winds—the struggle-cries of death are o'er ;
Gone is the victor, and the vanquished fled,
And round her lie in heaps the silent dead,
The fallen steed, the riven shield and car,
With all the wreck and havoc of the war.

Fair Mina left Torlatha's tower,
Dunalbion sought at twilight hour,
And by the sounding ocean's marge,
Stretched cold upon his blood-dashed targe,
The dark-eyed chief she found !—
Along the cliffs, along the shore,
Where late was heard the battle-roar,
A lonely shriek of anguish rings
On sullen night's dim, flagging wings,
As sinks the maiden on the ground !

Again she rose ;—the fierce wolf howled—
The grim bear o'er the dead man growled,
As he rent with his tusks the mail away,
And gorged on the flesh of kings till day !
Then she, despite her wild alarms,
That death-pale warrior in her arms
To the woody stream of Lona bore,
And from his deep wounds washed the gore ;—
But he spake not—moved not—by his side
Sunk Mina on that blood-red field and died !

CARAUSIUS.

Thanks, honoured bards, right well have ye attuned
To deeds of ancient years your solemn harps.
On your deservings shall my hand bestow
Imperial largess.—Swordmen, now advance !

Display, ye Samnite gladiators, all
Your warlike sports with energy and skill,
Unstained by blood. (45)

*(The Gladiators perform a mock exhibition of their
feats to the sound of martial music.)*

(To Malwina.)—Do not these splendid halls,
The rich-toned warblings of the bardic harp,
The sprightly dance, and gladiatorial sports
Of manly strength, find favour in thine eyes?

MALWINA.

Nay, marvel not, my lord, if scenes so new
With all their pomp o'erpower a simple maid,
Whose home has been till now a desert cave,
Whose poor companions in her lowly state
Were woodland fawns, and gentle birds that sang
Amid the red flowers, rich with morning dews,
Their artless lays of joy, till grove to grove
Spake sweetly in wild music.

CARAUSIUS.

Now then, my gallant chiefs, drink deeply all,
Ere to the nuptial shrine I lead my bride.
Lift high your rose-crowned cups, and wave your gar-
lands,
In honour of your emperor's spousal hour.

ALL.

Joy to the bridal of the great Carausius! (46)
(Shouts, trumpets, &c.)

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

Mighty Augustus! pardon me, who am
The bearer of ill news.—Constantius Cæsar

Has, with a powerful fleet, passing the Straits
Of Hercules, landed in Gaul, and driven
Thy firm allies, th' Armoricans and Francs,
From all their cities ; and he threatens now
To pour his legions on the British shores.

CARAUSIUS—(*rising*).

What ! do our treacherous partners in the empire
Menace this noble isle ? We laugh to scorn
Constantius and his host ! This arm has torn
The chains of bondage from my own home isle,
And hurled them in the face of her oppressors !
Britain shall lift her head in bold defiance
On her eternal rock, whose heights outswell
The stormy billows, and from thence behold
The shipwreck of her foes. A mariner,
A dauntless sea-king, now her bright crown wears ;
And well shall he maintain, to the last drop
That warms his patriot heart, the sacred rights
Of his loved people, who will by his side
Defend the glory of their native land,
And to those tyrant lords that fain would bind
The world in slavish chains, from shore to shore,
Shout—BRITAIN SHALL BE FREE !

ALL.

Most noble Cæsar !
Freedom or death ! shall be our banner-cry.

CARAUSIUS.

Have these vain-glorious fools of Rome forgot
How I at midnight stormed Maximian's camp,
When he in hurried flight his safety sought,
While Ocean, to my will obedient, rose
Dark in his stormy wrath, and deep beneath
The vaulting billows dashed those rampart walls

Raised round Bononia's port, to hem me in (47)
With all my battle-ships?—Then forth I steered
My fleet in triumph, and the cliffs of Gaul
O'er the great deep re-echoed loud the shouts
That hailed me emperor.—What, can they forget
How I, when here enthroned, near Vecta's isle (48)
Maximian's fleet in glorious conflict met,
And spread the surges with its burning wreck,
Till all the blood-stained ocean seemed on fire?

ALLECTUS.

O, what a spirit-moving scene was that,
When your brave galley by his admiral lay—
Her crimson banners to the winds displayed,
With beak of burnished brass, and bank on bank
Of oars, that rose and fell, like giant wings
Of silver, flashing in the midday sun
To martial pipe and clarion!

CARAUSIUS.

Ay, my friend—
Then as I grappled to her side the Roman,
How flew around us arrows, spears, and stones,
Thick as the tempest-hail that fiercely comes
Down on the hill of winds!—My dart-pierced shield
Was like a rock on which the green trees shake
Their foliage to the breeze; my clymore streamed
With reeking blood—I stood upon the dead,
And soon the leader of the Roman fleet
Met sword to sword!—My battle-heated brand
Smote his proud war-crest, as the thunderbolt
Dashes against the tower, that shattered falls
Amid the storm;—he sunk with dying groan
On the blood-deluged deck—I shouted forth
My victory to the skies, then hurled a storm

Of sulphury firebrands on his shrieking crew !
Loosed from our hold, their kingly-moving ship,
With sail and banner blazing, o'er the deep
Floated a red volcano, wrapped in smoke,
Till down she sank with death-cry, yell, and shout,
Amid the hissing waves ! while I, the lord
Of ocean, won the triumph !

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

Noble Cæsar—

CARAUSIUS.

What tidings of high import dost *thou* bring ?
For such thy looks seem big with.

MESSENGER.

Good my lord,
The chieftain of Damnonia's provinces,
Dungarth, is from his secret hold come forth,
Like a grim hungry bear, and hath stirred up
Rebellion in the west.

CARAUSIUS.

Ha, slave of hell !

Is that despiteful dog again in arms ?
Sulpricius, with the Flavian legion, shall
Make war against him, and the rebel's head
Be hither brought to grace my palace gates.

MESSENGER.

Imperial Cæsar, all the Cangian chiefs
Have joined his standard, and are in full march
Iscalia to besiege.

CARAUSIUS.

The Cangi too !

Dare *they* rebel?—Why then take off the heads
Of all those youths given by that stubborn tribe
To me as hostages, (49) when I subdued
The herd-groom warriors, and their blood be on
Their fathers' brows!—Vindoma, see it done!

[*Exit Vindoma.*

MALWINA.

O, let me for those hapless youths intreat!—
Slay not the innocent!

CARAUSIUS.

Sweet, simple maid,
The Roman law requires their instant death!
It pains me to deny thy first request.
This foul rebellion calls for vigorous means
To quench its rising flames; more dangerous far
This homebred strife than all the fleets and legions
That Rome can send against us.—From the feast,
Princes, we must retire to secret council.
Forgive me, sweet Malwina, this departure
Awhile from thy loved presence.—Soon will come
The hour of bridal bliss, when Hymen's rites
With sacrifices in Jove's awful fane
Shall be performed, and on those lovely brows
This hand the British diadem shall place!
[*Exeunt Carausius, Allectus, and several chiefs; others
remaining at the banquet at the upper part of the
stage. A bard, with his hood concealing his face,
comes down nearly opposite Malwina, and leans
unobserved on his harp, steadfastly watching her.*

MALWINA.

Would I were crowned with death-flowers on my bier,
And for the trump-tones of these gorgeous halls
My funeral dirge were sung by weeping maids! (50)

How ill accords this scene of festal joy
With the sad feelings of my aching heart !—
Bright, shadowy spirit, dweller of the clouds,
Dost thou not for thy loved Malwina sigh ?—
Where at this hour of her sad destiny
Art thou, my dear Ambrosius ?

BARD.

Here he stands,
White-bosomed maid, on thy soft beauty gazing !

MALWINA.

Ye blessed saints that guard the innocent !
What voice was that ?—'Twas an illusive spell,
Some viewless spirit flung upon the air
To enchant my startled ear.—Oft have I heard
Such flute-like tones come on the evening winds,
Wandering in music by me as beside
His monument I lingered in the woods
Of my late happy home.—'Twas but the dream
Of a bewildered fancy—I would have
Soft melody to soothe my troubled soul—
Mournful, yet sweet as angels breathe around
The flame-pile of the martyr.—Gentle bard,
Why dost thou o'er thy silent harp-strings lean
As if in sorrow ?—Hast thou no wild tale
Of mingled love and sadness to beguile
My heart of its own anguish ?

BARD.

Yes, I have
A tale of one who in the battle fell,
While a false-hearted maid——

MALWINA.

His voice again !—
Off with that shadowy hood !—I will behold

Thy dim, pale ghost, and rushing to thine arms
Die on thy bosom !——Ha ! 'tis he ! 'tis he !

(The Bard, throwing back his hood and opening his vest, discovers himself to be Ambrosius. Malwina shrieks, and faints in his arms.)

AMBROSIUS.

This looks not like cold falsehood.—Gentle maid !
And dost thou love me still ?—Force may, perchance,
Have placed thee in the power of this Carausius.
Look up, and bless me with thy wonted smile,
My beautiful, my own beloved one !

MALWINA—*(reviving)*.

And dost thou live, indeed ? and art thou not
The vision of my dreams ? No, no—I see,
I feel thou art alive !—and thou hast dared
To seek me in the dreaded lion's den !—
O, I am wild with transport, thus again
To view thee risen as from the loathsome grave,
All warm with life, to know that thou art come
To rescue thy Malwina from the power
Of him my soul abhors.

AMBROSIUS.

Dost thou, in sooth,
Maiden of beauty, scorn this self-praised Cæsar ?
O, thus to know that thou the pirate hatest,
More than repays the miseries I have borne
For loss of thee, my only joy on earth.

MALWINA.

Thou shalt not lose me—we'll together fly
To some lone isle or region, far remote,
Beyond this ocean-warrior's utmost reach.

But tell me, how, with life, didst thou escape
From the blood-fields of slaughter? where I learnt
My knightly hero fell, no more to lift
His battle-spear, or through the bannered ranks
Dash on his gallant war-steed !

AMBROSIOUS.

In the last

Fierce conflict with the Persian, on whose side
The furious Parthians fought, heaven's blue arch rending
With their terrific thunder-yells of war, (51)
I, steed to steed, the champion of the east
In deadly combat met—The mighty one
Fell by this conquering arm!—But—Heaven so willed—
The last blow of his giant weapon smote
Through my steel-guarded side, and I too sunk
Amid the gory carnage of the field.
There all the night, my dead foe for my pillow,
I bleeding lay ; and as the copious dew
Chilled my cold, stiffening limbs, I turned mine eyes
To the bright stars outflashing in the west,
And thought of thee and my loved native land,
To whom I bade, with burning tears, farewell !
But, as the day-smile flushed the rosy skies,
Some peasants of the country, seeking spoil,
Found me still breathing, and at my entreaties
Conveyed me to their dwelling, where my wounds
With balmy herbs they healed.—Then soon I bade
Adieu to my preservers, and in search
Of Dioclesian wandered.—He I learnt,
After the battle, had returned to Rome :
I to that city followed him, and thence
Hastened my pilgrim-feet once more to set

On mine own native shores, and to this bosom
Take my lone dove of beauty.

MALWINA.

How didst thou;

Ambrosius, find me here?

AMBROSIOUS.

I cannot paint

My heart's wild joy as I, at eventide,
Thy forest-cavern reached, where we had spent
So many blissful hours of love together.
How throbbed my veins as I its portal passed,
And stood once more beneath its lofty roof !
But all was silence, solitude, and gloom !
On thy sweet name a thousand times I called,
But no one answered, save the viewless echo,
That, like a lonely spirit prisoned there,
Regretful for thine absence, still sighed back,
A thousand times, Malwina !

I roamed the woods and valley, but in vain ;
Till, after long and weary search, I learnt
That thou hadst, with thy sire, for ever left
Thy forest-home to be the empress-bride
Of this Carausius.—Cursing him, the spoiler,
I hither flew, in deep disguise, resolved
To tear thee from the pirate's arms, or bathe
Thy bridal altar with my gushing blood !

MALWINA.

My gallant, generous prince, this night we'll fly——

AMBROSIOUS.

Whither, my sweet Malwina, shall we fly ?
Such is the corsair's power, should we attempt
To quit this isle, his numerous fleets, that guard

Our sea-encompassed land, would intercept
Our flight, ere we the stormy ocean cross'd.
No: if we fly, my gentle maid, we must
As banished exiles wander far from all
The social haunts of polished man, and herd
Amid the forest depths, with wolves and bears,
And lawless mountaineers; more brutish c'en
Than the most savage brutes!—Canst thou, so young,
So beautiful, quit these luxurious scenes,
Where bright refinement and magnificence
The witchery of their dazzling splendours shed—
While round thee wait a thousand gold-clad slaves,
And princely courtiers in low homage bow?
Canst thou the imperial diadem give up,
Cast off those gorgeous trappings of proud state,
Forget thy sex, and roam the savage woods,
In the rude wolf-skins of an outlawed slave?
Or can that delicate and lovely form
Mix in the battle-tumult, hurl the lance,
And bend the bow of steel; nor heed the blast,
The bitter howling blast, when tempests rave,
In all their fury, o'er the desert heath,
And lightnings rend the oak, while leafless woods
Beneath the hoary desolation bow
Of winter's drifting snow?

MALWINA.

Ay, dear my lord,
My own Ambrosius, joyously I'll quit
These radiant halls of revelry and song,
To which, by a fond sire's entreaties won,
Have I been brought—fling off these glittering robes
Of gems and gold, and, tearing from my locks

This bridal veil, these rosy-blushing wreaths,
Array me in the woodland hunter's garb ;
Nor in the arrowy van of combat shrink,
But brandish at my warrior's side the sword,
Faithful to death !—I will not fear the rage
Of tempests, when their gathered winds come forth,
Like sounding hosts, to battle, and the oak
Sinks, struggling, in its pride ; nor when the elk
Shakes from his brows the desert snows at morn,
And the white woods beneath their burden bow.

AMBROSIOUS.

O, what in strength can equal woman's love !
In the bright hour of joy our brightest bliss,
And still the constant beam that sweetly sheds
Its trembling radiance o'er our dark despair.

MALWINA.

What though we from the haunts of polished life
Are driven to seek the desert, why should we
Herd with the wolf, or fiercer robber clan ?
No, we will make our summer bower alone,
Mid forest shades, where dwells the gentle fawn.
The hazel, and the scented lime-tree, hung
With woodbine-blossoms, shall our home o'erspread,
And there the wild rose shed its evening flowers.
Our dwelling shall these kingly halls surpass
In all the splendour ; for its emerald roof
With gold and living gems shall nightly burn,
As through the leaves ten thousand watchful stars
In their rich glory flash ;—nor shall we lack
Those sweetly-mellowed music tones that wait
On Nature in her holy solitudes.

The vesper-winds, as they their incense waft
To day's departing orb, round every bough
Will their inconstant anthems faintly sing,
While, leaping forth with his deep voice of joy,
A merry spirit of the woodland dell,
The blue fount warbles ever.

AMBROSIUS.

Ah, sweet maid,
And shall we find, amid the wilderness,
A spot like those bright islands of the blest
Where Druids say that happy spirits dwell?

MALWINA.

Yes—for 'twill be the paradise of love.
There, when we press our leafy couch in peace,
On its bright rainbow-canopy of flowers,
The nightingale shall sing our bridal hymn,
As through the shades the tender moonlight steals,
Kissing the sleepy blossoms.—When the morn
Her roseate splendours o'er the forest flings,
The sprightly lark shall rouse us with her lay,
While the full chorus of the laughing woods
Hail the bright coming of the eternal sun.
Nor when stern winter with his ruffian blasts
Plunders the groves of all their verdant pride,
Shall we be comfortless;—no, dear Ambrosius,—
For then we'll in some sparry cavern dwell,
Like my loved home by Derwin's valley-stream;
There, as the noisy winds, in bitter wrath,
Rush howling through the cloudy hall of storms,
And to the heavens the mountain proudly shows,
Lightning-endiadem'd, its gloomy brow,
We'll charm, with harp and song, the hours away.

AMBROSIOUS.

Yes, we, my dear Malwina, shall be blest,
In the communion of each other blest ;
Feeling no want of man's delusive pomp,
Or his false fellowship.

MALWINA.

I was not formed
For artful courts, and gaudy scenes like these.
Dear are to me the empurpled hills and woods,
The beauty of the morn, in sunbeams clad,
The golden-vested eve, star-crowned by love,
The virgin softness of the moonlight hour,
When every sound melts on the ear in music ;
The thunder pealing through the mountain glens,
And all the tempest's dark magnificence !—
Who then that joys, like me, in Nature's pomp,
Would linger in these prison-halls, or sigh
For the poor grandeur of man's home of care ?
When, in their splendours, forest, hill, and vale,
Woo me to come and taste their dewy freshness ;
When cataracts in tuneful thunders call,
And fountain-urns, and birds, and fragrant flowers
Of fairy tints, with all their pleasantries,
And voices of sweet sound, invite me hence !

AMBROSIOUS.

Since thou wilt, dearest, for my sake, become
A dweller of the desert, we this night
Will from these towers escape.—Freedom unfurls
Her sacred signal-banners in the west,
And we will shape our flight for Coitmaur's forest. (52)
The pirate soon may fall.—Now let us part :
At midnight in the vestibule we meet—
Till then adieu.—O, Venus, guide our steps

Safely o'er mountain, heath, and sedgy moor,
Till we the embowered retreats of Coitmaur reach.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Tower or Fortress of
Duncarmo.*

Enter Ruthinia and Oriuna.

RUTHINIA.

How didst thou from that horrid rock escape,
Left by thy cruel lord to perish there?
Thy story moves me greatly.—We are here
Free from the intrusion of those warrior chiefs.

ORIUNA.

O, 'twas a dreadful hour!—on every side
The vastness of the sea stretched far and wild,
Each moment gaining, with its sullen roar,
Upon that little surge-devoured isle.
The ruthless billows had already reached
My trembling feet, and I, foam-sprinkled, stood
Shivering to the cold blast that whistled through
My dark hair, floating round me, when the moon
Shone brightly out between the passing clouds,
And I beheld a vessel sailing near!
I waved my scarf, and shrieked aloud for help;
They heard my cries, and kindly sent a boat
Which took me from that death-rock, (53) as a wave
Swept howling o'er its deeply-hidden brow,
And safely bore me to the distant shore.

RUTHINIA.

How canst thou feel a wish again to see
This savage emperor? Not for worlds would I

Be placed within his power ! Lady, with us
Remain in safety, nor attempt to dare,
A second time, his jealous wrath, which knows
No spark of mercy.

ORIUNA.

What, is this poor life
Deprived of honour ? Who would bear its load
When crush'd with obloquy, contempt, and shame ?
O, I would dare a thousand deaths to prove
Before the world my stainless innocence !
And I *will* prove it in the British court !
Then, though from his stern bosom—where so oft
I've hung, while rapture beam'd in his fond eye—
He dash me to the ground, ay, trample on me,
And with his dagger pierce my faithful heart,
That loves him still, I shall with pleasure die,
And, like the setting sun, when from his orb
He flings the shadows of the stormy clouds,
With the pure lustre of a spotless name
Depart, undimmed, in glory !

Enter Dungarth in armour.

DUNGARTH.

Now, proud lady,
Thou dost behold me what I truly am,
No longer a poor fisher, but a king !—
Once more in arms I shine, and lift the shield,
The sacred shield of freedom, for my country.

ORIUNA.

Name not thy country's freedom, Dungarth, no !
That is a poor disguise, a specious veil
Thou o'er thy dark and plotting treason fling'st,

To hide its hideous visage.—Britain owns,
With glory owns, Carausius for her lord,
Whose eagles, winged with victory, splendours shed
O'er her proud brow, that dazzle Rome, and strike
The adder-stings of envy through her heart.

DUNGARTH.

His glory is dishonourable fame ;
'Tis not the mild and radiant light of justice,
Cheering the land it shines on, but the glare
And dagger-flashes of oppressive power,
At noble freedom's naked bosom aimed !
He rules by Roman laws and Roman swords,
And all that bear the hated name my soul
Despises and abhors !

ORIUNA.

Thou, factious chief,
A traitor art to him and to thy country !
For thou wouldst by rebellion plunge her deep
In civil strife, and with a reckless hand
Let the fierce hell-born fiends of discord loose
O'er this fair empire, in their whirlwind course,
To scatter ruin, havoc, death, and flames !
Be warned in time—Dismiss thy rebel bands,
And at the footstool of Carausius kneel
In humble homage ; then mayst thou regain
Thy princely father's seat.

DUNGARTH.

I, lady, kneel
In homage to a pirate, whom e'en Rome
Hates and disdains !—No!—I, sprung from the line
Of Belgæ's princely warriors, was not born
To cringe, and lick the dust beneath the feet
Of a proud upstart, who would dare to bind

The chains of servile bondage round these limbs,
And make me his poor tool—Never will I
Bow to a slave-born corsair, till some arm
Of greater power than mine, in battle-field,
Shall from my shoulders take this head, and roll
The bleeding trophy at the tyrant's feet !

ORIUNA.

Then written is thy doom !—And canst thou hope,
Vain-glorious as thou art, the wreath to win,
Where he, the lord of battle, hurls his lance,
And dashes, in the sun-refulgent car
Of victory, through the war-ranks ?

DUNGARTH.

Can I ?—ay,
I *do*, by the pure flames of Melcom's shrine !
But why vaunt'st thou with such a lavish tongue
Of this proud tyrant's might ? who, scorning thee
And all thy lofty beauties, leads this night
(As faithful spies inform me) to the altar
A high-born princess of the Celtic line,
On whose fair brow this isle's imperial crown,
In some few hours, amid the shouting court,
Will in its splendours flash.

ORIUNA.

O for the wings
Of the strong eagle to convey me hence,
To pierce these clouds that darken me, and rise
Once more to honour's brightness ! At thy feet,
Prince of the darkly-flowing locks, I fall ;
For thy sad tidings have subdued my pride,
And humbly, fervently, to thee implore
For freedom and release, that I may hence,
And in the emperor's court for justice call !—

O, let me now depart ;—'tis not for pomp,
For titles, or for empire, I would clamour,—
No—but to prove I have been basely wronged ;
To prove my innocence—than crowns or life
To me far dearer !—Grant me, grant me this,
And I'll to thee return, and be thy slave !

DUNGARTH.

Free art thou to depart, for I no longer
Deem thy captivity my cause can aid.
'Tis his deep policy which makes him choose
An empress of our ancient regal blood,
That he with rosy wreaths may hide the chains
Flung round my injured country.—Hence, with speed—
And to the crafty pirate with thee bear
My stern defiance.

ORIUNA.

By the avenging gods,
If he refuse to listen to the proofs
I bring him of my innocence, and scorn
To do me speedy justice, I will make
His palace-halls with my deep injuries ring !
Then, if I perish in his awful presence,
I'll die as I have ever lived—with honour !

[*Exit Oriuna.*]

DUNGARTH.

Go—and may wild confusion, rage, and strife
Be thy attendants. Hark ! the tempest-winds
Come in their anger forth.—Ruthinia, 'tis
The hour when I the tomb of my famed sires
Must enter, with due rites, and seize the sword,
The magic brand of Britain's liberty. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Grove of Oaks on a lofty place. In the centre a great tumulus surrounded by rocks. On one side an entrance, concealed by a large stone. A storm, with thunder and lightning—solemn music.*

Enter a procession of British Maidens, who move in slow dances round the tomb, scattering on it flowers. A train of Druids in their sacerdotal habits, Bards with harps, then Soldiers with banners and arms. Dungarth, Ruthinia, Dhu Cadern, and Celtic Chiefs.

GRAND CHORUS.—INCANTATION.

Spirit of the honoured dead !
To what regions art thou fled ?
Lo ! thy tomb we burst asunder !
Hark ! a thousand peals of thunder
Through thy dim death-chamber ring,
To break thy slumbers, warrior-king !
Spirit, dost thou dwell on high
On eagle rocks amid the sky ?
Where mountains of eternal snow
Hang piled o'er ice-gulfs far below ;
There, with those spirits who the wind
And tempests in their caverns bind, (54)
High converse hold at sunny even,
When earth beneath seems turned to heaven !
And hill and plain, all amethyst,
Glow like the dove's empurpled breast ;
While golden wood and lofty steep
Flame out with glory—and the deep,
In liquid ruby, flashing lies,
A mirror of the gorgeous skies.

Or dost thou the blue ocean roam,
And make its coral caves thy home?
There with its serpent monsters play,
And join the mermaid's magic lay? (55)
I' th' wave-gods' pearly halls of power
Feast with the sun at evening hour?
Where ten thousand gem-bright flowers
Bloom around their wealthy bowers,
And shaft and pillar burn with light,
Like fire-clouds flashing through the night,
When loud winds hurry them along
To the dark tempest's thunder-song—
Or, with the sea-maids, fairy isles
Form'st thou of clouds and sunny smiles,
Flinging o'er all Elysian dream
Of grove, and field, and hill, and stream,
Cheating the mast-boy's gladdened eye
With visions of a sunset sky,
Till fades th' enchantment from his sight,
And all around is lonely sea, and sky, and night!

Spirit of the warrior-dead,
To what regions art thou fled?
Dwell'st thou in the isles o' th' blest,
Where our mighty fathers rest?
Where remembrance bears no sting
Of earth in its imagining;
Where the weary still repose
On beds of violet and rose,
And music of the nightingale
Is heard in every wood and vale;
While the winds melodious sigh
To the waters warbling by,

And the fountain flings its showers
Through the fruit-trees' golden bowers ;
Where the hero's hunting horn
Wakens up the laughing morn ;
Where, with airy bow and spear,
He oft pursues the flying deer—
Then returns to quaff and sing
In the halls of banqueting.

Warrior-spirit of renown,
Who didst wear the kingly crown,
Dost thou, riding on thy cloud,
Bid yon flames the skies enshroud ?
Or dost thou on far distant shores,
Where the combat-tempest roars,
Dash in thy shadowy car along,
Amid the fiercest warrior-throng ?
Or art thou by the victim-stone
Listening to the captive's groan ?
Where'er thy mighty spirit dwells,
We invoke thee by these spells:—

By thine everlasting fame,
By great Hesus' warlike name,
By the gods in heaven that dwell,
By the gloomy powers of hell,
By that spectre-haunted tree,
The cross of blood, the agony (56)
Which the sprinkled victim feels,
When 'neath the sacred knife he reels—
By the ghosts of all thy line,
And the sun's blood-scattered shrine—
By our solemn mysteries, by
Th' eternal God of gods, we cry,

Grant, thou dim cloud-vestured spirit,
Thy son may thy death-sword inherit !—(57)
As thou hopest in peace to rest,
Grant, O grant him this request.

Roll the stone of the dead away !—
Protected by our magic lay,
Dungarth shall enter, and the brand
Take from the slumbering warrior's bony hand !
(*The stone is removed, and Dungarth enters the tomb.*)

SEMI-CHORUS.

From their hall of dark clouds come
Kingly spirits round the tomb !
Lightnings from their bright spears flash
To the thunder's dreaded crash !—
Hark ! airy harps with solemn chantings ring,
And there are sounds like th' eagle's rustling wing
Borne on the stormy blast !—Our spells have woke
The giant warrior on his dusty bed ;
The slumber of unnumbered years is broke,
And slowly he uplifts his awful head !
(*Dungarth rushes from the tomb with the sword
and shield.*)

GRAND CHORUS.

See ! Rinvala's dauntless son
Hath the sword of freedom won !
And his father's brazen shield,
Which shall, in the combat-field,
On the car-borne warrior's head
Victory's lightning-glories shed ;

While that dread glaive shall, in his hand,
Drive the proud stranger from our land !

Hark !—on the night-winds from afar
Come the stormy sounds of war !
'Tis the Roman horn's shrill wail,
Echoing from Moilena's vale ;
'Tis the tramp of warrior men,
Marching down Cathmorna's glen ;
'Tis the clang of knight and steed
Rushing on to battle-deed !
Through Atha's wood, to thunder-light,
Flash buckler, sword, and eagle bright.
Now Ardin's plain is all on fire,
With host on host, in war-attire !
Onward ! to the battle-cry—
Britain !—Our King !—and Liberty !

*(Shouts—grand march—the sword and shield
borne before Dungarth.)*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Grand Audience Hall in the Palace of Sorbiodunum. At the upper end, the imperial throne, under a canopy of purple, showered with golden palm-trees, as emblems of the emperor's victories.*

Enter Carausius, Montcellius, and Allectus, attended by the whole Court. The Lictors, with their axes, and the Eagle-bearers, advance on each side of the throne.

CARAUSIUS.

Now let th' ambassador from Rome appear
Before us—in the presence of our court ;
We'll give him audience, as becomes a prince
Who sits on Britain's throne.

Carausius takes his state.—Enter Octavius, attended.

Octavius, thou

Art welcome to our shores.

OCTAVIUS.

Health to Carausius !

CARAUSIUS.

What greetings from our partners in the seat
Of earth's dominion bears thine embassy ?

OCTAVIUS.

I bring thee words of peace and right good will
From Rome's great senate, and the lords o' the world,

If thou accede to their decrees, gone forth,
Regarding thee and Britain.

CARAUSIUS.

Their decrees !

Why, what have the decrees of Rome to do
With me or Britain ?—I am sovereign here !—
Not her Cisalpine provinces, or those
That lie beyond the cloud-veiled Pyrenees,
No, nor her own Italia do I claim ;
Nor on the golden shores of Afric's clime,
Or the bright east, have I made one attempt,
By policy or arms, to win dominion ;
But while one gallant soldier lives to fight
Beneath my standard, or one war-ship floats
On Ocean's wave for British liberty,
I will retain the sceptre of the West
With unrestricted power, and Britain shall
Be free from Roman bondage !

OCTAVIUS.

Then I'm sorry

To tell thee, that the emperors and the senate
Will be thy foes, and Rome her legions pour,
Led by Constantius, on this rebel-isle !—
Mark me—unless thou own them for thy lords,
And as their legate rule, at once resign
The imperial title, which thou hast usurped,
(For so they bade me speak) give up thy fleets
To their appointed officers, and make
Britain a province of the Roman empire,
They will make war on thee and all the tribes
That in this island dare abet thy treason,
Till they have driven thee from the British throne !

CARAUSIUS.

Then tell them, that the war shall never cease
Long as Carausius, whom they fear and envy,
Has in his veins one drop of British blood!—
What! own these Romans for my sovereign lords,
Who, full of treacherous guile, retract their oaths
Of peace and friendship, sworn before the world,
When they acknowledged me—through craven fear—
Their partner in the empire!—Yield my fleet!
The very bones and sinews of my country!—
A dauntless seaman, in whose bosom beats
A British heart, whose brows the laurelled crown
Of Britain wears, give up her noble fleets
To a proud foe that would, in fetters bound,
Drag her a slave at his triumphal car!
No!—I would sooner limb from limb be torn
By savage beasts of prey, than yield one plank
Of Britain's glorious navy, or one foot
Of her loved soil, to a rapacious foe!

OCTAVIUS.

Constantius has a powerful fleet prepared,
And waits for me on yonder Gallic shores;
When I to Cæsar shall thy words repeat,
The signal-banner from his admiral's mast
Will to the breezes fling its blood-red folds,
And his armada hide the British seas!

CARAUSIUS.

Soon shall the seas hide him and all his fleet
Deep in its caves, the ocean-monsters' prey!
May this boy-Cæsar speedily embark—
Say, that we long, on our own element,
To meet him fleet to fleet, and ship to ship!

Then shall be seen what Britons can perform,
When by their sea-king led, their chosen prince,
In liberty's great cause ! Then will we prove,
I, and my people, of one heart and soul,
United to repel an insolent foe,
Whether this noble isle, that stands aloof
From all the world, a world within itself,
Fenced and embosomed by the eternal deep,
Shall be a free and independent land,
Or a degraded province of the Romans !

OCTAVIUS.

The Britons by revolt have forfeited
Their rights and privileges, and must soon
Submit, as conquered rebels, to those laws
The senate and its emperors shall impose.

CARAUSIUS.

Their rights, their privileges, and their freedom,
Which they so highly, dearly prize, and which
Their brave forefathers have from age to age
Shed their best blood in torrents to preserve,
They now in sacred trust to me confide,
As their deliverer from the Roman yoke,
Their brother, father, and their patriot prince !
That charge right manfully will I maintain
Against all tyranny and lawless power,
Or nobly perish in its just defence,
Winning a name that shall for ever live
With fadeless glory in my country's annals !

OCTAVIUS.

Sorry am I to bear such rebel words
Back to Constantius : hoped I to have been
The messenger of peace. Own but the power

Supreme of Rome, and thou may'st still remain
The greatest man in Britain.

CARAUSIUS.

No, Octavius,—

Mehercules! I'd rather be the least!—
Ay, e'en the dungeon-slave that toils and pines
In Rome's infernal prisons, where no beam
Of daylight comes to cheer her wretched captives, (58)
Than be the instrument, the miscreant tool,
By which she would enslave my dear-loved country!—
I scorn to reign a bondman to her will,
And be the king of slaves!

OCTAVIUS.

Then I foresee,

Carausius, thy dominion will be short.

CARAUSIUS.

Short let it be, if such the will of Jove:
But glory and bright fame shall mark its course
To after years, and I shall be renowned
As the first prince who for my country won
The empire of the seas!—Ages unborn
Will name me as the founder of her greatness,
When her proud fleets shall round the ocean sail,
And with her warlike triumphs awe the world!
Go, tell these Roman Cæsars I will die
As I have lived, an independent prince
Of a free people!—But we fear no power
That Rome can lead against this envied isle
Of dauntless warriors.—Dynasties may fall,
And tyrants from their palaces be driven,
Despised and hated, as the useless chaff
Before the winnowing tempest; but the king
Who, in the affections of his people fixed,

With justice rules, and guards their rights and freedom,
Shall every storm that shakes his throne survive,
More firmly rooted, and immortal live,
From age to age, the glory of his country !

OCTAVIUS.

I have your leave, Carausius, to retire ?

CARAUSIUS.

See him in safety to the coast conveyed. [*Exit Octavius.*]

Enter Messenger.

How now !—The news.

MESSENGER.

Sulpicius sends, my lord,
To say he has a bloody battle lost,
And Dungarth is victorious !

CARAUSIUS.

Ha ! then we,
To-morrow's dawn, ourselves will take the field.
As flies the bounding roe from hunter's shout,
So shall these rebel hordes, that dare to sound
The trump of civil strife, before the flame
Of our bright arms retreat ;—when they are quelled,
We'll mount the galley's deck, and onward lead
To nobler battle-coil our island fleets,
Where Britain shall with Rome for conquest struggle !
Chieftains, we must be active !—these are times
That call on every Briton through the land,
Whose bosom with one spark of patriot zeal
Burns for his country's honour, in her cause
To arm with gallant bearing, and protect
Her liberties and weal.—Such manliness
Can only make us worthy of the name

We proudly boast, the name of valiant Britons !
But first our marriage rites shall be performed.
Lead forth Malwina—to the temple porch
Let the procession of our spousals move.

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Imperial Cæsar, thy fair empress-bride
Is from the palace fled !

CARAUSIUS.

Ha ! fled ! with whom ?

Her father ?—

OFFICER.

No ; it seems, my lord, that he
Was ignorant of her flight.

CARAUSIUS.

Pursue her, quick !—

She cannot from the city gates escape.

Bring her to Juno's temple.—Onward ! lead !

[*Exeunt Carausius and Attendants—manent Allectus and Montcellius.*]

ALLECTUS.

Montcellius, these are stirring times for us.
Ere Rome invades, we must the pirate strike !

MONTCELLIUS.

Ay, now the golden hour of our revenge
Dawns brightly ! Let us to the temple haste,
And on the altars of the gods outpour
His blood in full libation !

ALLECTUS.

Tribune, thou
Wouldst mount, like Phaëton, our sun-bright car,
Unknowing how to manage its fierce steeds.

He who cannot with firm and stoic calmness
Guide the proud chariot which to glory bears him,
Though rolling on the whirlwind, from his seat
Will soon be dashed, and set the world on fire
To perish in its flames !

MONTCILLIUS.

By Hercules !

The tardy-working plots of wily statesmen
Suit not my eager daring.—

ALLECTUS.

Hear me, chief.

Ardoc, the stormy spirit of the north,
To-morrow will arrive at Aburi's temple
With all his warlike clansmen.—I have won
The Arch-Druid to our purpose, and by him
All who in secret to that fane will flock,
Their mystic ceremonies to perform,
For 'tis Midsummer's ever-hallowed eve ;—
There, as I stand by the inaugural stone,
The pillar of the ancient Celtic kings,
The Druid on my head the crown will place,
And me proclaim their emperor.—Then we'll join
With all the British powers the imperial legions,
In which to-morrow this Carausius takes
The chief command against th' audacious Dungarth ;
He to our tented council I'll allure
With all his chiefs,—for little does he dream
I was the tribune, by another name,
Who scourged him to the bone !—there shall he fall,
With his attendants, by our trusty swords !
Thus at one blow, Montcillius, will I crush
This dangerous insurrection of the west.
Then, with blood-reeking blades, at midnight watch,

We'll rush into the pirate-dog's pavilion,
And stab him on his couch, while through the camp
Our partisans shall shout—Allectus reigns !

MONTCILLIUS.

Hope comes at last.—But why seek'st thou the aid
Of these wild Britons to obtain the crown ?
Have we not in the legionary ranks
Sufficient friends to this right noble cause ?

ALLECTUS.

Uncrafty youth—in dangerous times like these,
When Rome without is threatening, and rebellion
Makes his red falchion bare, I'd all men win,
All parties and religions, to my cause.— (Flourish.
Those trumpets sound the emperor's bridal march !
Join we the grand procession.—Aid me, thou
Bright injured spirit of my Oriuna,
In this great work of empire and revenge
On thy accursed destroyer ! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The outside of the Temple of Juno in
Sorbiodunum.—Night.*

Enter Ambrosius and Malwina disguised.

AMBROSIOUS.

See ! how the torch-lights flash on yonder steps
That to the palace lead, like the red track
Of lava-fires which down the mountain-steeps
Of Ætna gleam afar ! We are betrayed !
The emperor's guards pursue us, and the way
I've lost, by which to reach the western gate,
Where I the watch have bribed to let us forth.

MALWINA.

O, my Ambrosius ! whither shall we fly ?

The guards advance ! they come, they come this way !
O, I shall sink with terror !

AMBROSIOUS.

Courage, love !

Let us ascend this portico, and try
The temple-gates.—Haste, dear Malwina, haste !
The valves yield to our wish ;—here we may hide
Till the pursuit is o'er, at least may claim
Protection from Carausius, at the altar.

[*Exeunt into the Temple.*]

SCENE III.—*The grand Nave of the Temple of Juno opening into the Cella, splendidly illuminated with lamps.—A Balustrade circles the Cella, ornamented with beautiful paintings and elaborate statuary.—A purple Veil, wrought with figures of gold, hangs from the roof, partly concealing the most sacred place, within which stands a superb Image of the Goddess on a pedestal of silver, her head encircled with a crown of sparkling gems, and by her side a Peacock in all the radiant hues of the living bird. (59) An altar of gold stands before her, smoking with perfumes—the whole Temple decorated with branches and flowers.*

Sprightly music.—Enter Maidens with garlands, the Rex Sacrorum in his robes, Flamins, Auspices, Victimarii, with their sleeves tucked up and naked to the waist, and a train of boys bearing flaming torches and censers of incense ; Ladies, carrying the distaff and spindle ; a youth with the Cumerum, or covered vase ; Priests of Juno leading victims, adorned with flowers and white fillets ; Allectus, Montcillius,

British Princes and Chiefs, standard-bearers, with eagles and the imperial globe ; Carausius, in his triumphal robe and crown, with the Sacred Fire carried before him, and followed by his Prætorian guards, with trophies and laurels.

REX SACRORUM.

Lead on the victims to the outer court.

Enter a Flamin.

FLAMIN.

Two fugitives at our high altar claim
Refuge and sanctuary. (60)

CARAUSIUS.

Lead them here ;

I must behold them ere you grant their claims.

(Ambrosius and Malwina are led in by priests.)

As I suspected—'tis the princess and
Some hired slave——and yet no slave looks he ;--
Distracting fears crowd on my troubled mind ! *(Aside.)*
Malwina in this vest !—And who art thou,
Arrayed in peasant weeds, that, in the hour
Of nuptial pomp, wouldst from these arms have stolen
My empress-bride, to plunge her in disgrace ?
Thy looks belie thy garb.

AMBROSIOUS.

Thou art the robber !—

I do not heed thy frowns—for thou didst steal
The treasure of my soul, my own true love,
Mine by affection's tenderest, purest ties !—
No matter for my name—I am a soldier
Of noble birth, and no slight fame have won
In Rome's imperial legions ;—here I stand,

And boldly claim this princess by the right
Of her affianced husband.

CARAUSIUS.

Frontless slave !

The serpent-breath of hell's dark furies blight
Thy dainty form, thou doubly-felon traitor !
Thou art the gold-bought spy of Dioclesian
And this Constantius, who in envy seek
To wrest the island sceptre from my grasp.
The altar shall not save thee from my vengeance.—
Death is thy sentence !—a disgraceful fate
Such treason shall reward !

MALWINA.

O, mighty prince,

Have mercy on the noble, gallant youth !
He is no Roman spy—'twas his fond love,
His tenderness for me that brought him here.
O, on my head let all thy vengeance light !—
'Twas I who urged him my escape to aid,
Heart-sickened with the splendours of a court.
To him were plighted all my virgin vows,
Amid the shades of my loved forest home.
I thought him dead, or I had ne'er been won
To enter thy proud halls.—O, warrior chief,
Let now thy generous nobleness of soul
Outshine the glory of thy wide renown,
And have compassion on two youthful hearts,
Linked in love's bands, which not e'en death can sever !
Let us depart in peace ;—we only beg
Some little hermitage amid the woods,
Some lonely cave, where ne'er ambition comes ;
There still our prayers at morn and eve shall be
For blessings on thy head !

CARAUSIUS.

No—never, never !—

It cannot be !—What ! quit her whom I love
With boundless, burning passion—yield her up
To a detested rival, and subvert
Those noble plans by which I hoped to bind
The hearts of all the kingdom to my interest ?—
O, I can feel the patriot's glorious zeal,
The warrior's fire, the love of bright renown ;
But such exalted nobleness of soul
I cannot reach ;—such Roman virtue I
Can ne'er attain—and if I could, by heaven !
'Twere madness to resign her !—Guards, secure
The traitor ! He shall die this very hour !
(*The soldiers seize Ambrosius.*)

MALWINA.

Alas ! if ever pity found a place
In that stern bosom, have compassion now
On a heart-broken suppliant, and revoke
Thy cruel sentence !—O, where is my father ?—
Would he were here to plead on bended knee !—
Sure his grey hairs, in sorrow bowed before thee,
Would waken pity in thy struggling heart,
And win thee to have mercy on his child,
Who, if Ambrosius falls, must with him die—
Die, maddened in despair !—

Enter Caswallon.

CASWALLON.

Die, my sweet child !—

And have I brought thee here, my innocent,
From thy loved, happy home of rocks and woods

To treacherous courts, for woe and death their fangs
So soon to fasten on thee ?—Cursed ambition !
Which tempted me to drag thee to these scenes
Of splendid misery !—Ha, Ambrosius here !—
Is he still living ?—Now I learn the cause
Why thou the palace fleddest—O, spare the life
Of this brave princely Briton, noble Cæsar,
And to him yield his long-betrothed bride ;
Then all the land thy justice will applaud,
And thine shall be the love of every heart.

CARAUSIUS.

Yield her to him !—No, rather yield my life,
My empire, and my glory !—If her hand
Malwina, bright enchantress of my soul,
To me will at the altar give, I swear
By Mavor, awful power ! to spare the life
Of this Ambrosius !—Speak the word, sweet maid,
His fate hangs on thy lips !

MALWINA—(*shrieking*).

Ha ! horrible !—

Mercy, Carausius ! O, have mercy on me !

CARAUSIUS.

Speak instantly, for I am wild with rage !

MALWINA.

O, dreadful, dreadful !—No !—I dare not give
This hand to thee while my Ambrosius lives !

CARAUSIUS.

Lead him to instant death !

MALWINA.

Hold, for the love
Of blessed heaven, and all the saints of light !—
Spare him !—O spare him !—Here, relentless man,

I give my hand, and with it yield my life!—
O, my Ambrosius! (*Faints in the arms of her father.*)

AMBROSIUS.

Tyrant! ravisher!
Thou soon shalt rue this guilty barbarous deed
Of lawless violence!

CASWALLON.

Unpitied chief!
Dig deep a grave that shall contain us both—
For keen remorse and sorrow soon will sink
These grey hairs to the tomb with my loved child!
O, yet revive for thy poor father's sake—
Look on me once again before I die!

Enter one of the Auspices, with his divining rod, in great terror.

AUSPICE.

Imperial Cæsar, all the victims slain
Give fearful signs and unpropitious omens!—
The marriage rites, my lord, must be deferred.

CARAUSIUS.

Away with signs and ominations all!
This instant shall the rites be solemnized,
Though earth and heaven should fearful warnings give!
Let e'en the dead start up, in horrors clad,
Before my sight, yet, by the sword of Mars!
Lovely Malwina, thou shalt be my bride!

[As Carausius goes to take the hand of Malwina, Oriuna rushes in and stands before him; he utters a cry of horror, and sinks senseless on the ground. All the characters group around him in terror and astonishment.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter Allectus and Oriuna.

ALLECTUS—(*to himself as he enters*).

My Oriuna lives.—Now is she mine—
I thank thee, goddess Fortune !—Empire, love,
Ambition, and affection, all shall soon
In full-tide glory meet to crown my wishes—
A bright reward for long-enduring patience !

ORIUNA.

Why am I hither brought, and not allowed
To see the emperor ?—Lead me, lead me to him ;
Each moment seems an age till I remove
The cloud that rests upon my slandered name,
And with unsullied innocence appear,
As I've been wont, before him !—Thou, Allectus,
Art his best, dearest friend—be also mine,
And aid me to regain his once fond heart,
Where I was shrined in love !

ALLECTUS.

I mean to be
Thy truest friend, and set thee on the throne
Of Britain's empire.

ORIUNA.

O, 'tis not for thrones
I am impatient, or imperial state ;—

Allectus, I am innocent of crimes
Alleged against me—crimes which I abhor !

ALLECTUS.

I know thou art——

ORIUNA.

Let me but clear my honour
To him whom still with virtuous tenderness
I deeply love, though he, in moody wrath,
Left me to perish on a sea-bound rock,—
And if it then shall be his stern command,
I will retire and dwell, unseen, unknown,
With solitude and sorrow.

ALLECTUS.

No, those charms
And noble virtues were not formed to pine
In dull obscurity, a prey to grief.
Such excellence befits the proudest seat
Of earthly power, and thine shall be the throne
Of this brave isle, on which the majesty
Of thy perfections, like the sun, shall shine
And make these nations with its lustre blest—
But not with thy fell murderer, not with him
Who left thee where the rage of storm and sea
Beat on thee shelterless, to be the prey
Of monsters—he the greatest monster born !—
And canst thou love, or kind esteem retain
For such a ruthless husband, who now seeks
Another for the partner of his throne ?
Husband !—No claim has he to such a title !
His cruelty hath broke the marriage bands,
And thou art, by the laws of men and gods,
Freed from his savage power !

ORIUNA.

What do I hear ?

ALLECTUS.

Ah, Oriuna ! hast thou then forgot
My passion—tender, ardent, and sincere—
Which in this heart, since first thy beauties met
My ravished eyes, hath undiminished burnt !
Thou didst refuse me for a murderous fiend,
Who never could have loved thee !—From thy heart
All thoughts of that devoted robber banish,
And yield thyself to him who hath so long
In secret languished for thy peerless charms.
I offer thee my hand, thou ever dear one,
And with it Britain's diadem !—for know,
In some few hours, I from the throne shall hurl
The proud Carausius, and amid the shouts
Of yonder host assume the imperial purple !

ORIUNA.

Patience, ye gods !—Till now surprise hath held
My tongue in silence.—Marry thee, false wretch !
Thou double traitor to thy prince and friend !—
I mount the throne with thee, dyed in the blood
Of my loved noble husband ! he who stands
In the full splendour of his gallant deeds,
Beside thy dark, perfidious, abject form,
Like the bright sun, that darts its golden beams
Athwart the thunder-tempest, fraught with death !

ALLECTUS.

Hear me——

ORIUNA.

Away ! I will not hear thee—
'Thou craven, treacherous slave !—What ! wouldst thou
dare

To lift thy arm against a mighty prince ?
Thou, who hast never done one noble deed
To gild thy villainies, or garland won
To rank thee with the great in deathless fame ;—
Shalt thou, base earthworm, crawl into the seat,
That seat of glory which Carausius fills,
And sit the mockery of imperial power ?
Shall the gaunt wolf the kingly lion beard,
And o'er the desert reign ? (*Trumpets.*) What sounds
are those ?

ALLECTUS.

Carausius, madam, to the battle-field
Goes forth with all his legions ; but no more
Shall he these halls behold ! his doom is fixed !
This is *my* palace now, and hither I
Shall soon return in bright triumphal pomp,
The Emperor of the West !— (*Shouts, &c.*)

ORIUNA.

O, for a voice
To drown those trumpet-sounds with cries of death !
Ha ! there he comes in all the blaze of arms
Through his loud-shouting ranks, to mount his steed,
That paws impatiently the ground, to bear
His gallant rider through the ranks of war.
What, ho ! Carausius, ho ! hear my wild screams !
Cease those triumphant notes !—Death ! treason ! murder !
Are at thy heels !—Help ! let me forth ! my cries
Shall drown a thousand trumpets !—Murder ! treason !
Unhand me, villain !—

ALLECTUS.

Guards, I say, advance !

Enter Soldiers.

Thou seest I am prepared on every hand.
Take this distracted lady to my chamber ;
There guard her till I to these palace towers
Return your emperor.—See that she escape not.
Look to it, on your lives !

ORIUNA.

I will not hence,
While I have voice or strength—Off ! touch me not !
By your allegiance, by the noble fame,
The honour and the glory of a soldier,
I call on you to seize that bloody traitor !
Seize him, and save your prince, your gallant leader—
Whose banners you have followed, who hath fought,
Bled, conquered, by your side, and to you given
Spoils of a thousand nations !—Seize that slave !
And I will to the emperor's face proclaim
His long-loved friend a cowardly assassin !

ALLECTUS.

Away with her this instant !

ORIUNA.

Soldiers !—no,
Ye merit not the name ! O, ye are slaves !
Slaves to the blackest, deadliest slave alive !
O, for one look, one last, one parting look,
Of yonder gallant hero !—O, my lord,
My husband, I shall never more behold thee !

(Oriuna is borne off by the Guards.)

ALLECTUS.

What stubborn constancy, where least deserved,
Some women manifest !—Weak-minded fools !
'Tis all perverseness, and the sex's pride,

Who contradiction love, and still will urge,
Like a strong current 'gainst the heady winds,
Onward their boisterous course; the more opposed,
The more determined—while their wilfulness
They dignify with the high-sounding name
Of noble fortitude!
But things of greater moment now demand
My thoughts and powers—I will release Ambrosius:
He needs no further spur than love to make
Him draw his sword for us. Now to the temple!
The crown—the crown of Britain—waits me there! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. — *One of the concentric double Circles formed of rock-pillars in the immense Temple of Aburi—a lofty pillar in the centre. Beyond this circle, through the openings betwixt the stones, is seen part of another circle of vast extent, which forms the outer boundary of the Temple, with a long avenue of pillars, stretching out in perspective to a distant hill, on which is another circle. Evening—fires, burning in other parts of the Temple, throw a partial light on the rocks. (61)*

Enter Chief Druid, with other Druids, and a Chorus of Bards. (62)

CHIEF DRUID.

We are the last poor remnant of our order,
Degraded from that awful power which once
Made kingly warriors tremble!—We are like
The shadows of the mighty, whose dark tombs
Are on the lonely desert—feeble ghosts,
That fade, with shrieks, amid the stormy clouds.

These Romans our authority have crushed ;
Another priesthood reigns, and a new faith,
The creed of strangers, like a deep, still stream,
Rolls through the land, sweeping away all rites,
Celtic and Roman, in its widening course !
Some few there are who, when our holy fires
Are lit amid this solemn temple, raised
To great TEUTATES, come to worship here (63)
In secrecy and dread.—Hail, hallowed hour !
Eve of Midsummer, hail !—Now visions rush
Of ages past in dimness o'er my soul,
And mournful are my thoughts !—On this great night,
In years departed with our brave forefathers,
Our hills and mountains shone with sacred fires,
And all our groves with blessed music rang,
Struck from the sweet harp of a distant land,
By the red strangers to our island brought ; (64)
Till Albion, like one mighty temple, seemed
With glory filled, and hymns of sacred joy
To Melcom, the bright ruler of the year.
Now we no longer dare the flames to light
Of BAAL-TINE on the dark and lonely hills ;
And in our honoured groves no sound is heard,
Save hunger-howl of wolf and death-bird's scream !

SECOND DRUID.

Though crowds of our high order long have fled
To other realms, where Rome has never stretched
O'er slavery's neck her sceptre-sword of blood,
Yet linger many in loved Albion's land
Who shall preserve our knowledge and our rites,
Wrapt in mysterious veil, to unborn years.

ARCH-DRUID.

No—my prophetic visions tell me we

Shall pass away in dark forgetfulness,
And our renown fade like a falling star !
Our tombs shall be upon the desert heath,
And darkly tell to other times there lived
A mighty race—but who shall sound our fame ?
This awful temple will be left forlorn,
Its grey stones sink with age in solitude !—
Thrice-holy fane ! can I these tears restrain
To think how, like a widow, soon shalt thou
Sit scorned and desolate ?—Mark me, ye bards—

BARDS.

We do, most reverently.

ARCH-DRUID.

Ye have been taught
How these vast pillars faintly shadow forth
Circles of space, eternity, and time !— (65)
The first is that which God alone pervades,
The GREAT SUPREME !—next Immortality,
The dwelling of the soul ; and last, the months
And days the sun rolls round in his bright course.
Yon circle holds three stones, which typify
The MIGHTY ONES, the dread CABIRI named, (66)
Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, centred all
In Him, the God of gods !—This lofty spire
Stands the TEUTATES ; he to whom this Bethel, (67)
Taught by the wisdom of Phœnician sages,
Our fathers reared—he who the seamen led
O'er stormy ocean to these distant isles ;
Who, in a land of mysteries, far from hence, (68)
Counted the golden stars, and now is made
The winged messenger from earth to heaven—
Conductor of the dead—and who, when comes
The end of all things, shall the dead restore !

Yon stone of death, the cromlech, on which streamed
The blood of captives, standing there alone,
The image is of that stern, gloomy god,
The principle of Evil!—Bear these things
Deep in your minds, ye bards, for music's power
Your order may prolong to distant years,
When round the heath-flower on our desert tombs
Sigh the night-wearied winds.

SECOND DRUID.

Be not thus sad

And hopeless, holy sire—

ARCH-DRUID.

Let come what may,

Here will I live and die ; for I have sworn
This seraph temple never to forsake—
All-hallowed shadow of Divinity !
Solemn to me are thine anointed rocks ;
Dear art thou to my soul !—Eternity
And resurrection, when from the cold tomb
To a new life and glory we shall spring,
And the dark reign of Evil be destroyed,
Are emblemized in thee.—May no rude hand
Thy sacred pillars touch, in years remote,
But may'st thou stand till earth in fire dissolves,
And the departing heavens shall be no more !

(Trumpets at a distance.)

SECOND DRUID.

Here comes the Roman chief, my lord, who claims
The British empire, and expects that thou
The diadem on his dark brows shouldst place.
He promises our rites and holy order
Shall be restored in Britain.

ARCH-DRUID.

Ah, good Carul,

Little reliance have I on the faith
Of Roman promises.—Can we forget
The tale of other years, when Romans rushed
Through Mona's blessed isle, bathed in the blood
Of all the priesthood, who brave martyrs fell
For freedom and religion, while the groves,
That dimly curtained with their jasper leaves
The solemn sanctuary of the gods,
Beneath the horrid axe, down-crashing, sank,
And altar, pillar, Bard, and Druid, lay
In one dire, gory ruin?

SECOND DRUID.

Many chiefs

Of Celtic lineage have the cause espoused
Of this Allectus.

ARCH-DRUID.

Ay, too oft are they

Ambition-won to any change of state ;—
But O, Religion, for thy sake alone
I join this Roman's dark conspiracy.
Strike the Phœnician harp, and chant the song
Of ancient times, the wizard-lay that calls
Those left of our few bands, whose pilgrim feet
Turn hitherward this night with us to worship.

CHORUS OF BARDS.

From the tempest-shook isles of the far distant West, (69)
Where the proud ocean sun-bird builds her lone nest,
And where to the breakers' fierce lion-like roar
Howls the dark fiend of shipwreck along the wild shore ;

From the cloud-compassed blood-cape, around whose
dim steep

Dash the storm-lifted waves of the foam-covered deep, (70)

Where the hurricane comes in its strength and its ire,

From regions unknown, on its red wings of fire.

From Carn-brê's oak groves and her granite-piled hill,

That ring to the harp and the trumpet's sweet thrill,

From her altars of death, and her rocks tinged with
blood,

And her old giant tree-god, the king of the wood ; (71)

Come to the sound of the harp's magic string—

Come, Bards, to the temple, come, Druids, to the ring

Of TEUT, for 'tis midsummer's joyous eve ;

Come all, and the gods' rich blessings receive.

From Penmaen Mawr's circles of dark-grey stone,

And Idris' proud star-crowned mountain throne,

From the snow-crested heights of the eagle's strong
brood, (72)

And the rocks of memorial in Mona's dim wood ;

From wild Karn-le-hau to the green Hebrides,

Set like emerald gems in the western seas ;

From the bright-gleaming sun-fire on Purbeck's high
mount, (73)

By the deer-hunter seen when he lifts the glad shout,

As he rises at dawn, and chases afar

The dun-coloured roes on the banks of the Var ; (74)

Where eternal it shines through tempest and gloom,

O'er the desert of night and the warrior-chief's tomb ;

From the wild heathy Meineu's forest-clad steep,

From the meteor-lit isles of the dark northern deep ;

From the shield-covered halls and the moss-grown bowers

Of Duth-caron, beyond Gal-Sever's strong towers,

Come all, to the sound of our magical lyre,
And merrily dance round the Baal-tine fire :
Bring flowers, bring branches of vervain and oak,
To cast on the flames as the gods ye invoke. (75)

SEMI-CHORUS—(*without.*)

To Midsummer's holy eve, all hail !
Its melodies float on the wings of the gale ;
The sweet bird of night joins your spell-woven lay,
That calls us to honour the bright lord of day.
See ! the moon from her palace of clouds comes to view
The dance of the fairies o'er the midsummer dew,
Illuming the shades with splendours that glow
Like the meteor's rich pomp, and the storm's radiant bow !
While the spirits of earth, and of ocean, and air,
With us to the rites of our Sun-god repair ;
From their cloud-isles of beauty that goldenly lie
Where sank from his glory the king of the sky ;
Where dwell those bright genii, with warriors of old,
In diamond tower and palace of gold,
Which o'er the pale shadows of eve deeply glow,
Where silver founts flash, and nectar-streams flow,
Where pearly seas roll round the amethyst bowers,
And sing in soft music to their beautiful flowers—
Now downward they glide to our low earthly clime,
To the hymn of the bard and the harp's witching chime.
Hark !—melodies, melodies that bright hopes inspire,
Waking echoes more tuneful than Sul's golden lyre, (76)
From airy harps float, where the green forest-bowers
Bend like fountain all silvered with moonbeam showers !

Enter Pilgrim, Druids, and Bards.

FULL CHORUS.

Hail to the temple of our sires !
Hail to the Baal-tine's hallowed fires !
Hail, sacred father ! hail, ye sons of song !
And hail to all this temple's holy throng !

ARCH-DRUID.

Welcome, good pilgrims, hither.— (*Trumpets near.*)

Carul, go,

With lustral rites those war-chiefs purify,
And lead them to our presence.

[*Exeunt Carul and several Druids.*

Ministers

Of the Divinity, ye who can read
The mystic writings of the twisted branch, (77)
Known only to our sacred order, learn
That we this night, at yonder regal stone,
Place the imperial crown of Britain's Isle
Upon a Roman's head, who hath to us
Sworn to restore our priesthood.—But he comes.

Enter Allectus in splendid armour, wearing the imperial robe, Montcellius, and other Conspirators, Ardrec, Ambrosius, British Chiefs, and Druids.

ALLECTUS.

Hail to the arch-pontiff of the Celtic faith !
Father of sacred knowledge, low we bow
In homage down before thee.

ARCH-DRUID.

Rise, my son ;
May'st thou be of our holy creed, and bend
In worship to our gods.—Bring forth the crown

From age to age preserved, the sacred crown
Of great Dunvallo, who the golden round
Of sovereignty first wore in Britain's land. (78)

[*Exeunt Druids.*]

Now stand thou by the pillar of the king, (79)
Where on thy brows the hallowed balm we'll pour,
While all the chieftains shout, Long live our sovereign!
(*Solemn music—the crown and anointing oil borne
in by the Druids—the Arch-Druid leads Allectus
to the chief pillar of the inner circle.*)

Before the imperial diadem we set
Upon thy brows, kneel thou, and turn thy face,
Allectus, to the north, where, in yon circle,
The dread Cabiri stand!—Those mystic pillars,
The symbols of the awful attributes
Of that great UNIVERSAL ONE who dwells
In bright infinitude! and swear by Him
To raise the Druid hierarchy divine
To their primeval honours, and subvert
The Christian faith which spreads o'er all the land!
Remember, dreadful is the solemn oath—
No power can e'er absolve thee, and the pangs
Of ages numberless in penal fires
Must follow its violation!—Kneel, ye chiefs,
And, with your future emperor, take the oath.

(*A shriek is heard behind, and a voice exclaims*)—
Hold, hold, Ambrosius! take thou not the oath!

Malwina rushes wildly in, and falls at the feet of
Ambrosius.

ARCH-DRUID.

Who dares our solemn mysteries profane
With her unhallowed presence?

AMBROSIOUS.

Malwina here !

Why didst thou enter this forbidden place ?

MALWINA.

Because I feared to mix with lawless bands,
Or stay alone in darkness far from thee,
Where fearful deeds of blood have been committed !
O, I implore thee, take not thou the oath,
The horrid oath, which will upon thy head
Bring everlasting curses !

ARCH-DRUID.

Chiefs of Britain,

Ye know 'tis death, by our most sacred laws,
To all who dare within yon bounds to come, (80)
Unpurified and unabsolved from sin
By lustral rites and prayer of Druid priest ;
And ere, Allectus, on thy head we place
The imperial diadem of our loved isle,
We this rash maid in sacrifice demand,
An offering to the sun.—Now, chieftain, now
Give us a proof that thou art of our faith,
And wilt our priesthood honour, as becomes
A duteous son, by leading that fair maid
To yonder death-stone.—Dost thou yield her up ?

AMBROSIOUS.

He yield her up ! what right hath he, or thou
To this loved maid, the chosen of my heart ?
No human power shall touch her, while this arm
A sword can lift !—The Roman laws have long,
Ye tyger-Druids, held you bound in chains,
And now ye deeply thirst for human blood
But if it here again must flow, 'tis yours
That shall, in ample floods, these stones bedash !

ARCH-DRUID.

Blaspheming wretch ! the gods, not we, demand
The victim's life, as their just right who gave it ;
The greatest token of our love and homage
They can from us receive. (S1)

ALLECTUS.

Ambrosius, peace !
No one, I swear, shall harm that gentle maid.

ARCH-DRUID.

Take back the Celtic crown.—I will not place
That precious treasure on thy faithless head,
Though death should be my doom !

ALLECTUS—(*snatching the crown*).

Then, by great Jove,
I'll place the crown myself upon these brows !—
Now shalt thou find I am the emperor here
Without thy aid.—I have no time for words—
Beyond the temple rampart thousands wait
Whose shouts will hail me sovereign of the isle !
Thy feeble voice I heed not. If I wave
This sword, they round these rocks will fearless rush
In gleaming arms, and fill the fane with victims !
He who is on *my* side shout manfully—
Long live Allectus, emperor of the west !

(*All the Chiefs shout, and are answered by continued shoutings without.*)

ARCH-DRUID.

Mark, thou false Roman, short will be thine empire !
Like the faint meteor shall its glory fade
In deep oblivion !—Hark ! the mighty wings
Of our great god, descending from yon stars,
That watch his awful temple, I now hear

Sweeping with torrent-sounds through heaven's dim
vault !

Terrific power ! king of the gates of death !

His shadowy pinions canopy the fane !—

He comes upon my spirit, and by me

Denounces on thy head the fatal curse !

Dost thou not hear his thunder-voice, that calls

Thee to the land of shadows and of darkness ?

Speed to thy doom ! Away ! the sword is drawn

That shall be red with blood ! a traitor's blood !

[*Exit Arch-Druid, Druids, and Bards.*

ALLECTUS.

Heed not his ravings.—Onward, chiefs, to where

The pirate lies encamped. Morn shall not dawn

Ere we have done the deed which makes this crown

Sit firmly on my head.—Sound, trumpets, sound !

And let your warlike clamours hail me emperor !

[*Exeunt.—Music within.—Manent Ambrosius and
Malwina.*

MALWINA.

O, join not this conspiracy of blood !

AMBROSIUS.

No—he is false as hell ! and basely steals,

With an assassin's hand, the British crown.

I will no more, my dear Malwina, hazard

The loss of thee.—To my ancestral home

Our weary steps shall turn, and find sweet peace :

There, in retirement, shall thy beauty bloom,

And spread love's rosy blossoms round our bower.

So that sweet modest plant of other climes,

Fearing the glare of day, its lovely flowers

To the soft dewy kisses of the moon

Opens in all their splendour, and makes rich

The night-winds with its odours; but when dawn
Comes laughing through the groves with wanton eye,
Its bashful petals, trembling, close, and die! (82)

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Tent of Carausius.*

Enter Carausius and Lilius.

CARAUSIUS.

To-morrow, tribune, at the break of day,
We give this Dungarth battle.—Hast thou issued
The order to our legions?

LILIUS.

Yes, my lord.

CARAUSIUS.

Think'st thou this traitor will not fly to-night,
And cheat us of a triumph?

LILIUS.

Noble Cæsar,

I rather think he will abide the chance
Of one day's gallant strife. His rebel bands
Are posted to advantage, and lie trenched
Behind yon swelling ramparts.

CARAUSIUS.

Well, I trust

We shall behold his banners floating there
When from my tent the trumpet summons me.
Good Lilius, go, bring me some generous wine;
Wine of the sun-loved hills of Italy.

(*Lilius brings wine.*)

Is it the midnight watch?

LILIUS.

Almost, my lord.

CARAUSIUS.

Time, thou with leaden feet movest slowly on.
When will the east roll back its heavy clouds,
And the bright ruby gates of morn unfold,
To let Apollo's flashing chariot forth?—
The night-air chilly feels.—Fill me a goblet—
This cheers the heart.—Fill for thyself, good Lilius—
We shall be warmer ere to-morrow's noon.—
Is not my friend Allectus yet arrived
Within the camp, with those brave northern bands,
By Ardoc led, whom he went forth to meet?

LILIUS.

No, gracious prince.

CARAUSIUS.

Well—leave me, tribune, now,
And set the midnight watch around my tent.
I'm wearied with this march, and on my couch
Would take a few hours' rest.—Call me by dawn.

LILIUS.

I will, puissant chief.

[Exit.

CARAUSIUS.

Rest!—can I rest?

No—rest comes not to me!—For now her shade
That by the altar stood, more palpable
Than any former vision, and forbade
The nuptial rites, with tenfold horror haunts
My troubled thoughts!—And must I then endure
This endless visitation of the dead?—
I'll call him back, and he shall watch my couch.—
Lilius! what ho!—Why, I but act the fool
Thus to expose my weakness.—No, I'll drown,
In ample draughts, these fears that shame the warrior—

As he takes the goblet, enter Oriuna: he dashes it on the ground.

Ha! all the horrors of dark hell rush on me!

She's here again!—Ho! Lilius! Tribune! help!

Save me! O, save me from that injured shade!

(Sinks on the couch.)

ORIUNA.

Carausius!——

CARAUZIUS—*(not daring to look at her).*

Ha, that voice! its thrilling sounds

Pierce through my icy heart!—Avaunt! avaunt!

Thou much-wronged spirit!——

ORIUNA.

I no spirit am,

But live and breathe; saved from that stormy rock

On which thou left'st me, in thy moody wrath,

To darkness and despair!

CARAUZIUS.

And is not this

Some wildly-blissful dream? Am I awake?—

Saved from that rock?—No, no, impossible!

Such joy is not for me.——

ORIUNA.

If it be joy,

Then open wide thine arms, and fondly take

Thy guiltless Oriuna to thy heart,

And make her once more blest!——

(He hesitates tremblingly—then, extending his arms, she rushes into them.)

O, my Carausius!

Indeed, indeed I am most innocent.

CARAUZIUS.

She lives! she lives! and I am once more happy!

Yes, innocent I know thou art ; for he,
The miscreant ! who seduced me by his wiles
To plan thy death—a slow, but dreadful death,
Fell speedily by this avenging arm,
And, dying, cleared thy honour.—But that night—
That horrid night !—How can I bear to look
On that mild face of innocence, or meet
The glances of thine eye ?

ORIUNA.

Turn not away—
For thou wilt, in these eyes, my lord, behold
No angry glance, but constant, fond affection,
Beaming through tears of rapture.—Ah, alas !
I must these transports check.—Thy life, my lord,
Thy life's in danger !—

CARAUSIUS.

What saidst thou ? my life
In danger !

ORIUNA.

Ay, Carausius—even now
Treason is plotting in this camp, with arm
Of power, to drag thee from thy throne, and steep
Her dagger in thy blood ! A horrid serpent
Round thy deluded bosom coils, and soon
His venom'd fangs will in thy heart be fixed,
If thou haste not to crush him !—

CARAUSIUS.

Say, to whom
Thy wild words point—

ORIUNA.

To Allectus ! that arch-traitor !—
Thy bosom friend ! thy brother dear in arms !—

CARAUSIUS.

Impossible ! it cannot, cannot be !

ORIUNA.

Nay, let me tell thee——Hark !—do I not hear
A distant tumult rising ?—

CARAUSIUS.

'Tis the wind
Around the tents low murmuring, or the tramp
Of silent guards.—Proceed, my Oriuna.

ORIUNA.

I to thy palace came, through seas and storms,
To clear my injured honour.—When I rushed
Amid the joyous temple's bridal train,
Thou thought'st I came a guest from other worlds,
But so did not Allectus ; for he led me
Forth from th' astonished throng, and privately
Unfolded his rebellion to mine ear,
Then dared insult me with his hated passion,
And tempt my virtue with that glittering bribe
He deemed already his—the imperial crown.
I spurned him from me, and the faithless slave
Made me his prisoner—but my guards were men,
And, when he left the palace, with me fled hither,
'To make his deep-laid treason known.

(Noise without, and clashing of swords.)

They come !—they come !—Alas ! I am too late
To save thee from their daggers !—Dreadful doom !
I now can only with thee die, my lord !—
Yes, in each other's arms we'll fall together,
And may the gods have mercy !

CARAUSIUS.

Ho ! my guards !—
Lilius, my armour !—bring my helm and sword—

My sword! my sword! that never failed me yet,
And I will singly combat with a host
Of foes and traitors!

Montcillius, Ardoc, Allectus, *and a crowd of Conspirators rush in with drawn swords.*

Ha! how dare ye, slaves,
Rush armed into our presence? Know you not
'Tis death to those who, when the watch is set,
Enter the emperor's tent?

MONTCILLIUS.

Ay, death to thee,
Thou tyrant!

ORIUNA.

Hold! for mercy hold—
Ye shall not murder him but through my heart!
(Montcillius *tears* Oriuna from Carausius.)

CARAUSIUS.

Leave me, my Oriuna, let me die
Like a brave Roman soldier.

ORIUNA—(*clinging to* Montcillius).

I'll hold thine arm
Till thou in pieces hack'st me!—O, Allectus!
Have mercy on us, if thou be a man!

(Montcillius *violently breaks from* Oriuna, *rushes on* Carausius *and wounds him—All the Chief Conspirators rush forward and stab him.—Oriuna shrieks.*)

Ha! God of gods! O, horrid, horrid sight!

CARAUSIUS.

Allectus too!—Thou worse than Brutus!—O!

(*Falls and dies.*)

ALLECTUS.

Now lift the shout of triumph through the camp,
Till yonder hills re-echo back the sound,
And cry, Allectus reigns! (*Shouts and trumpets.*)

ORIUNA.

Base monsters! fiends!

A hell-begotten crew of murderers all!
O, ye have slain the greatest man on earth,
The bravest soldier, and the noblest prince!
Cowardly slain him, and your country left
Defenceless to her foes!—O, my Carausius,
Sad was our parting hour, but sadder far
This meeting-time of death!—Thy gaping wounds—
O, horrible! they rive my heart in twain!

ALLECTUS.

My Oriuna, now shalt thou be mine!

ORIUNA.

Thine!—she would rather on the desert meet
The fierce blood-drinking tiger, rather feel
His death-fangs in her throat, than thou, dark fiend,
Shouldst with thy touch pollute her!—But there yet
Is mercy with the gods—

(*Snatches the sword from Montcillius, and stabs herself.*)

This is the way,

The only way I can escape thy power.

ALLECTUS.

Ah, thoughtless fool! Montcillius, thou hast suffered
My brightest wreath in victory's hour to fade!
Rash Oriuna, I now mourn my triumph,
And e'en revenge grows bitter!

ORIUNA.

Hence! stand off!

I cannot die in peace if thou approach.—
Wait, my Carausius, for thy Oriuna—
We shall at last be happy.—Grief is past,
And crowns await us in the Elysian bowers,
Where death nor treachery comes—(*Dies.*)

ARDOC.

Rouse thee, Allectus; this is not a time
For fruitless wailings o'er a stubborn woman.
Resume the man, if thou wouldst be the emperor.
I hear the clash of swords amid yon tents.
There yet are foes to conquer.

ALLECTUS.

Right, brave prince;
We must not thus give way to useless grief.

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Great Cæsar, Dungarth and his rebel host
Have under cover of the night assailed
The drowsy camp, and this way comes the chief,
With footsteps deeply dyed in 'Roman blood!
All is, my lord, confusion and alarm!

ALLECTUS.

Thou dost mistake; he is no foe of ours;
He comes, though late, with all his chiefs, to join
Our brave confederacy.—Now mark, when I
My sword wave thus, let not a man escape
To see the dawn; our victory then, my lords,
Will be complete, and won the British crown. (*Shouts.*)

Dungarth, Dhu Cadern, and British Chiefs enter, with
their swords bloody.

Why, how now, Dungarth! It was not to slay

Our soldiers, but the tyrant of the isle,
That I for thee did send.

DUNGARTH.

That voice ! that face !—
How they recall to mind those bloody stripes
I from the tribune bore !—(*Aside.*)

ALLECTUS.

But know, the deed
By us is done—Behold thy foeman fallen !

DUNGARTH.

My vengeance then dies with him for the wrongs
He did to me—But, treasured here, lives still
A deep, unsated, deadly, fierce revenge,
Which blood alone can quench !

ALLECTUS.

Hast thou not yet
Glutted thy tiger-appetite ?

DUNGARTH.

'Tis he !
'Tis he ! I know him by that scornful smile
Which curls his bloodless lip.—(*Aside.*)—No, loath-
some villain !
Detested hell-dog ! serpent ! coward ! traitor !
Dark murderer of thy friend that trusted thee !
Thou art the wolf that bade thy shag-eared slaves
Scourge me with thongs !—Me, born the princely heir
To kingdoms !—till my veins gushed crimson showers !
Now blood for blood ! and thus I quaff my fill !
(*Stabs Allectus.*)

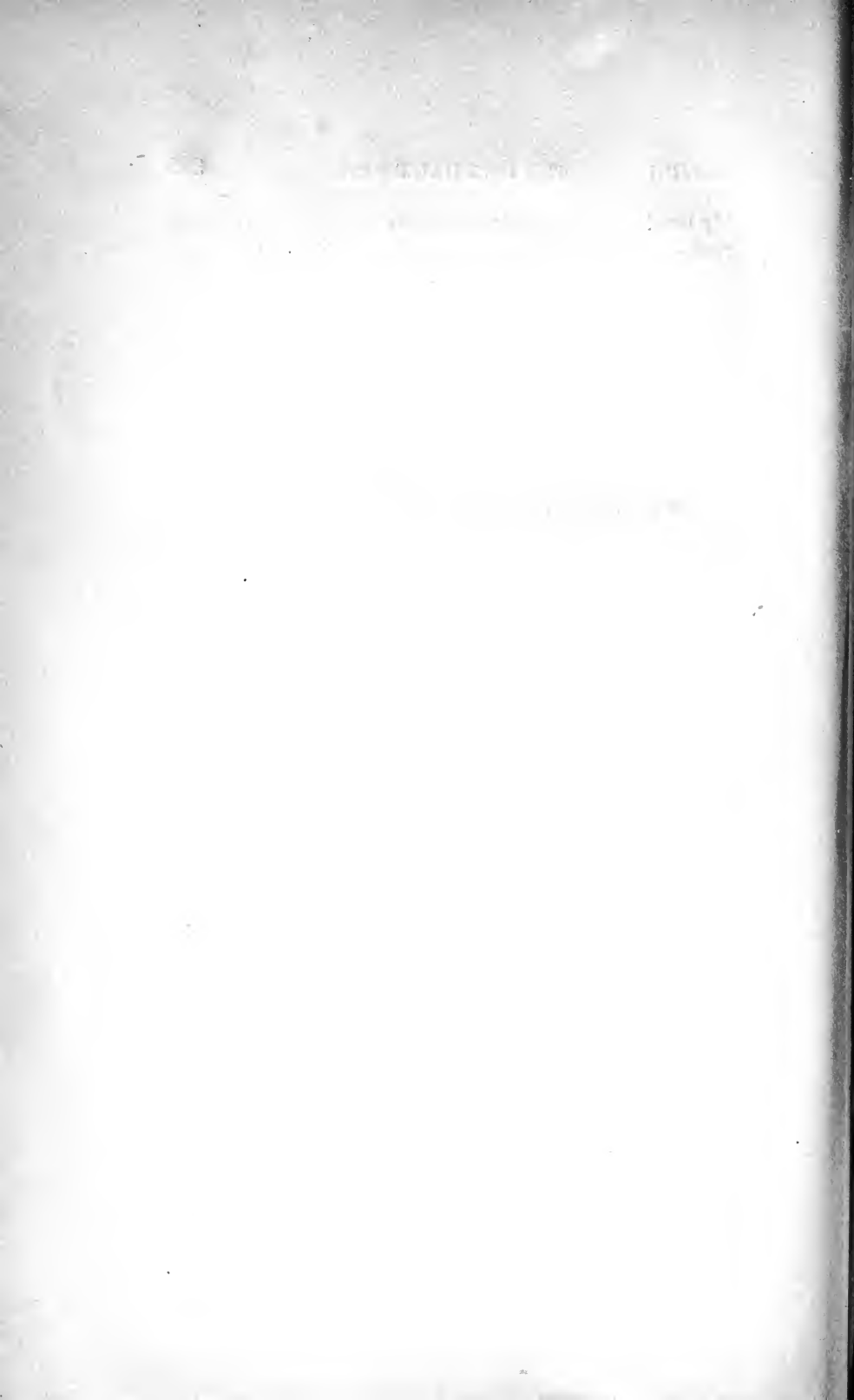
ALLECTUS.

Ha ! British dog !—Fall on, my friends and guards,
And let me see him bleed, before I breathe

My last!—O, terrible, to perish
Just as my hand had grasped the——(Dies.)

DUNGARTH.

Move not an arm!—the man that stirs shall die!
Ye are my captives all!—Ten thousand swords
For Albion's freedom wave around these tents.—
Constantius' fleet hath in the ocean mist
Escaped the British navy, and is now (83)
Landing upon our shores!—On, then! and he
Who manfully will for his country fight,
Let him the British standard join, while I,
Your rightful sovereign prince, will lead you forth,
And my loved island from her foes defend,
Or perish on her shores for liberty! [*Exeunt omnes.*]



NOTES.

- (1) *From the dim forest comes
Sad music, like the sound of lonely harps,
When they foretell the fall of warrior-kings. . . p. 269.*

A superstition among the ancient Celts.

- (2) *Sorbiodunum's towers,
Erst the time-hallowed city of the Sun. . . p. 270.*

‘ Nothing can more decidedly show the importance of this great citadel (Sarum) of the Celts than its various names:—First, if I am right, the City of the Sun (Sul, Sol); next the City of Carautoc, Caractacus; next, the City of the Cæsars.’—Vide that highly interesting work entitled *Hermes Britannicus, by the Rev. Lisle Bowles.*

- (3) *He Dioclesian's banners in the east,
To win new glory, followed. . . p. 270.*

‘ Under the emperors, the Roman armies were in a great degree composed of foreigners, and the provinces saw with regret the flower of their youth carried off for that purpose.’—*Tacit. Hist.* iv. 14.; *Agric.* 31.

- (4) *I, by thine aid, yon funeral mound have raised. . . p. 270.*

‘ The Romans raised their *tumuli inanes* or *honorarii*, as Æneas did for Deiphobus, whom he supposed was slain, and his body lost. The soldiers of Drusus cast up one for him in Germany, though his body was carried to Rome. *Cenotaphium vel tumulus honorarius, &c.*’—Vide *Suet.*; *Tacit., Ann.* i. 26. At this period the Britons were Romanized in their manners.

(5) *Coritania's ancient city*. . . p. 271.

Leicester—the Rate Coritanorum.

(6) *In one day were slain
A thousand holy martyrs near the walls
Of sad Etocehum!* . . p. 272.

Lichfield arose from the ruins of the Roman Etocehum, and owes its name to the massacre of a thousand Christians, slain by the fury of the pagans in the tenth persecution. *Lich* signifies, in the old Saxon, a corpse, from whence comes the word *lichwake*, to watch with the dead.

Bede says, in Leicestershire and in Lichfield so many were slain, that these places became another Golgotha, which, says John Ross of Warwick, the latter name imports—a field of dead bodies. For this cause, says Speed, the city, even to this day, doth bear for its seal an eschochean or field charged with many martyrs.

See also *Sammes, Aurel. Vit., Eusebius, &c. &c.*

(7) *Young Ambrosius,
Prince of the Catyellani*. . . p. 274.

The Catyellanii were the original inhabitants of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and part of Hertfordshire.

This emperor, this Carausius—

Is a prince

Renowned for warlike deeds throughout the world. . . p. 274.

‘Dioclesian, and Maximinian Hercules his adopted son, whatever their aversion might have been to such a partner, were compelled to purchase peace by acknowledging Carausius emperor in Britain, which he governed as an independent monarch. There are now extant some of his coins, having on one side his head, with this inscription—“IMP. CARAVSIVS, P. T. Aug.,” on the reverse, the portraits of two emperors joining hands, alluding particularly to the peace with Maximinian. Besides these, are some medals of Dioclesian, Maximinian, and Carausius, having on the reverse “*Providentia A.U.G.G.G.*” and “*Pax A.U.G.G.G.*,” which show that there were three emperors at that time, and at peace with each other.’

Lord Coke, in his Essays, remarks that a triumvirate of emperors was an unusual phenomenon ; but the state of the continent was so tottering, that neither Dioclesian nor Maximinian were in any degree strong enough to dismantle the achievements of Carausius. Some faint preparations of resistance were attempted by Maximinian, but necessity compelled the Romans soon to withdraw hostilities, and to enter into articles of peace, by which inglorious treaty the proclaimed PIRATE was declared *Felix*, and the avowed USURPER was surnamed *Augustus*.

(8) *Bright Lindum's halls*. . . p. 274.

City of Lincoln.

(9) *The palace of Sorbiodunum*. . . p. 278.

This mountain-fortress (now Old Sarum), in distant ages, was no doubt called the Hill of the Bards, the City of the Sun, worshipped at Stonehenge. This temple, and its worship of the sun, Diodorus, from Hecatæus, has plainly described, and I am happy to find that my conviction of this, published in *The Tale of a Modern Genius*, is fully confirmed by so able a writer and scholar as the Rev. Lisle Bowles. 'They have also a city,' says the Sicilian, 'consecrated to this god, whose citizens are most of them harpers that chant the sacred hymns of Apollo in the temple. They have likewise among them philosophers and diviners, whom they call SARONIDES, who are held in great veneration and esteem, through whom they present their thank-offerings to the Deity. These Druids are obeyed both in peace and war.' Sorbiodunum, one of the names of this city, seems to be derived from both its sacredness and its strength. *Don*, or *dun*, in the Celtic and Scythian, implies a fortified place or hill, and I have always found that when *don* or *dun* is compounded in the name of any place in this kingdom, it possesses the remains of some ancient fortress. For instance, Bindon, a hill-city on the coast of Dorset, is undoubtedly, from its most singular remains, of Phœnician origin ; Bhin, in Phœnician, is a lofty hill—also Dunium, Maiden Castle, near Dorchester ; Dunheved, Launceston in Cornwall ; Dunstaffage, the renowned seat of the first Scottish princes, and where the stone of Scone, on which they were crowned, was originally so long preserved.

'There is much reason to think the emperor Severus sometimes took up his abode in this city. Here unquestionably dwelt many

noble Romans, as is most evident from the coins of Constans Magnentius, Constantine, and Crispus, that have so frequently been found amidst its ruins. It was taken at length by Kenrick the Saxon in 553, and continued for many ages the residence of the Saxon kings.—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

According to the author of *Antiquitates Sarisburienses*, several of the Roman emperors actually resided here.

(10) *Mirrors of glass*. . . p. 278.

Speaking of a window at Pompeii, Sir William Gell says, 'It was not only formed of glass, but good plate glass, highly ground on one side, so as to prevent the curiosity of any person upon the roof.

'In process of time, glass became so much the fashion, that whole chambers were lined with it. The remains of such a room were discovered in the year 1826, near Ficulnea, in the Roman territory, and are hinted at in a passage of the Roman Naturalist: "Non dubie vitreas fracturas cameras si prius id inventum fuisset."

'In the time of Seneca, the chambers in *Thermæ* had walls covered with glass and Thracian marble; the water issued from silver tubes, and the decorations were mirrors.—*Pompeiana*, by Sir William Gell.

(11) *Beautiful paintings*. . . p. 278.

By the late researches made by the government of Naples in the ruins of Herculaneum, in the interior of a house were discovered many pictures, representing Polyphemus and Galatea, Hercules and the Hesperides, Cupid and a Bacchante, Mercury and Io, and Perseus killing Medusa. Also vases and articles in glass, bronze, and terra cotta, as well as medallions in silver, representing in relief, Apollo and Diana.

The newly discovered paintings are far superior to those previously found, and prove that painting among the ancients was not below the other arts.

(12) *Now the slave*
Has o'er his late rag-covered shoulders flung
Th' imperial purple. . . p. 278.

Carausius, many historians assert, was a man of mean parent-

age, by birth, of Menapiæ, now St. David's, or, as others affirm, of Batavia.

- (13) *Noble consul, the præfectus thou
Of our Prætorian bands shouldst—* . . p. 279.

'Carausius took Allectus, his præfectus prætorio, for his colleague and fellow-consul. Aurelius Victor says the præfectus prætorio was the next man in dignity to the emperor.'—*Medallie Life of Carausius*, b. i.

'Every magistrate who was a judge of military persons and causes, and commander of the soldiery, was styled prætor, and his court the prætorium. The prefect of the prætorium at Rome was the commander of the emperor's prætorian guard. To him was committed the care of maintaining public discipline and good manners, and he received all appeals made from governors of provinces. This office was created by Augustus to supply the duties of *Magister Militum* and the Dictators. Constantine abolished the prætorian guard and the prætorium at Rome, and instituted four præfects of the prætorium; two in the east, the one called of the East, the other of Illyricum; and two of the West, called, the one of Italy, and the other of Gaul. These were the supreme magistrates of the empire, and held the next place to the emperor. All other magistrates and governors in the provinces were subject to them, and they commanded both the armies and the provinces.'—Vide *Onuphrius de Imperio Romano*; *Hotmannus de Majistrate*; *Gutherius de Officii Domus Augustæ*.]

- (14) *Britain's isle, my native home.* . . p. 282.

Dr. Stukeley says, Carausius was sprung of the old British blood royal, of a graceful personage and a fine understanding. Some believe him to have been a Roman.—See his life by Mons. Génébrier. At all events, it was agreeable with his policy to assert himself a native of Britain. Helinandus, who lived in the twelfth century, in the Passion of St. Gerion, asserts him to be of noble birth. So also does Eutropius.

- (15) *And her proud war-ships lift her banners high
In triumph o'er the world!* . . p. 282.

Dr. Campbell has very justly observed, 'that Carausius deserves to be remembered in our history, since, how bad soever his title

might be, he made a good prince to the Britons, and carried the maritime power of this country so high, as not only to vindicate his own independence, but also to strike terror into the whole Roman empire. It is true, many historians treat him as an usurper, a thing that appears a little hard, since those they still call emperors had no better title than what they derived by fighting on land, which serves to afford him some colour of right in virtue of his power by sea.'

'A mariner can only command mariners; the element is formed for the people, or rather, the people, like the fish, are formed for the element. Had Carausius been a land officer, all his schemes must have proved abortive; but from those few particulars of his life which have reached our times, he appears to have been as successful as he was wicked, as bold as he was powerful, and as fit to command as he was ready to execute. It is to him we owe the first dawns of our naval power, which has since appeared in all its meridian glory.'—*Lord Coke*.

'His fleets rode triumphant in the Channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused beyond the columns of Hercules the terror of his name.'—*Smollett*.

'A.D. 288. Towards the end of this year, Maximinian sent express orders to kill Carausius, but he had the caution to prevent it. He had address enough to gain over all the officers, secured the outworks of Boloign, and stood on his own defence. Carausius engaged the whole of Legio IIII., Flavia, and several more, to side with him; and Maximinian found himself unable to force Boloign to surrender, so that, on September 7, Carausius was saluted emperor, and he carried away the whole Roman fleet (then under his command) with him to Britain, where he was received with all possible acclamations of joy.'—*Medal. Hist. of Marcus Aurelius Valerius Carausius*.

- (16) *Enter a band of Ambubaiaæ, or Syrian maids, playing on flutes. . . p. 286.*

The Romans, at their splendid entertainments, hired bands of Syrian maidens, called Ambubaiaæ, signifying a flute, to play on those instruments, as the voluptuous conquerors of the world lolled on their couches. Carausius, no doubt, imitated all the luxuries and splendour of his former masters.

- (17) *Caswallon and Malwina kneel to the emperor. . . p. 286.*

It was in the reign of Carausius that kneeling to the emperors was first introduced by Dioclesian.

- (18) *When my triumphant fleets rode o'er the deep,
Guarding the imperial provinces of Rome
From the bold ocean-rovers of the North... p. 287.*

'The Franks and Saxons so infested the coasts of Belgium, Gaul, and Britain, that the Roman government was compelled to station a powerful fleet at Bologne to confront them. The command was given to Carausius, a Menapian of the *meanest origin*, but a skilful pilot and a valiant soldier. It was observed that this commander attacked the pirates only after they had accomplished their ravages, and never restored the capture to the suffering provincials. This excited suspicion that, by wilful remissness, he permitted the enemy to make the incursions, that he might obtain the booty on their return.

'The emperor, informed of the treasons of Carausius, ordered his punishment. Apprised of his impending fate, he took refuge in augmented guilt and desperate temerity; he boldly assumed the purple, and was acknowledged emperor by the legions in Britain.'—*Hist. Ang. Sax.*

- (19) *The conquered chiefs of Caledonia's land,
And the fierce Picts, are now our firm allies. . . p. 288.*

'Carausius had valour and dexterity enough to quiet these hostile and warlike nations of the Scots and Picts. In short, he made them friends to each other, and friends to himself.

'But to give the higher sanction to the covenant made between these potentates, he built that round temple on the banks of the river Carron, called Arthur's Oon, the British Pantheon, where, on an altar, they religiously swore to be faithful to each other—the king of the Scots, and of the Picts, and Carausius.'—*Dr. Stukeley.*

An ignorant wretch, some years ago, demolished this temple, to build with the stones a mill-dam.

(20) *Gal-Sever's barrier-lines.* . . p. 288.

The British name of the wall built by the emperor Severus across this island.

'This wall repaired,' says Dr. Stukeley, 'by Carausius, was one of the noblest works of human labour ever performed by a great people. It stands unrivalled in Europe. It was seventy miles in length, with eighteen cities, eighty-one castles, and three hundred and thirty-three turrets, with all their mounds, roads, ramparts, and astonishing apparatus.'

'W. Hutton, esq. walked six hundred miles, at the age of seventy-eight, to survey the dimensions of this celebrated shattered wall.'
—*Mrs. Hedgeland's Epitome of General Knowledge.*

(21) *The great image of Mongontus.* . p. 291.

An idol in the mythology of the ancient Britons, worshipped in Northumberland. Camden says, that Risingham, on the river Reed, a Roman station called Habitaneum, was in his time popular on account of its having been the abode of a deity, or giant, called Magon; and appeals, in support of this tradition, to two Roman altars taken out of the river, inscribed Deo Mongonti Cadenorum.

(22) *Caer Conan's regal tower.* . . p. 291.

King says, Conisborough Castle in Yorkshire was the seat of the Brigantian chiefs, and called Caer Conan, the City of the King, standing near the river Dune or Dun. This tower, the architecture of which is far anterior to the time of the Romans, still remains perfect, and commands the most beautiful views.

(23) *Sea-girt Minavia.* . . p. 291.

The Isle of Man.

(24) *The green isle of Yverdhon.* . . p. 291.

The Celtic name of Ireland.

(25) *And thou o'er Coritania shalt be king. . . p. 293.*

The Romans permitted many tributary kings, or princes, to rule under their dominion in Britain, as well as in various other parts of their vast dominions. As a proof of this, I need only mention, among numerous others, Prasutagus king of the Icenii, who, dying, left by his will the emperor and his daughters coheirs to his possessions and treasures.

‘Many of these sovereigns were allowed by the Romans to continue in possession of their thrones, and enjoy the full extent of their ancient authority. Under all the rigour of the provincial regimen, the sovereigns of the tribes were allowed to remain in general. This our historians have never supposed before; and the reverse of it has been universally believed, but the fact is sufficiently authenticated.

‘And at this remarkable era (the time of the Roman departure) we see monarchs appear immediately in every quarter of the island; and the whole body of the Romanized Britons as much divided into distinct principalities as ever the primeval had been, and as much under the government of distinct princes.’—*Whitaker's Manchester.*

(26) *Gather valiant men,—
I'll tell the emperor they are needed here
To guard the southern coast. . . p. 293.*

‘Such were the *feudal* tenures of the Britons. And in the continuation of them under the Romans, the obligation of attendance upon the king in his wars would still be retained by the crown, but enforced only at the command of the conquerors. Prudence would induce them in this manner to continue the ancient privilege of royalty.

‘It would enable them, upon any emergency, to raise a number of soldiers, and embody them with their own, with great facility and without expense. And had such a power of the crown been taken away from it during all the long era of the Roman residence, it would never have been recovered afterwards, and consequently could not have descended to the British sovereigns of Wales.’—*Ibid.*

(27) *And pleasant, Dungarth, 'tis with thee to hear,
As I do now, in this our sheltered cave. . . p. 302.*

‘Eponine had married Sabrinus, a Gallic prince, who revolted,

in 69 of the Christian era, against the emperor Vespasian. He was conquered, and hid himself in a subterraneous cavern. He informed Eponine of the place of his retreat; where this tender wife found him, waited upon him for nine years, and was delivered of two children. At length their asylum was discovered, and Vespasian caused them both to be put to death, without respect to the virtue of Eponine.'

'On viewing the caves and dens which once belonged to the Britons, it is impossible not to call to mind, that after the defeat of the Canaanites by Joshua, five of their kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkeda.'—See *Munimenta Antiqua*, on the hiding-places of the ancient Britons.

- (28) *And the time-hallowed spectre oak that dares,
Proud of its strength, to wrestle with your might! . . .* p. 303.

'The Gauls (or Celts) called the misselto, guthyl, or guth-eyl, that is, good-heal; and the oak, marentaken, or the tree of spectres.' This must have had an allusion to the human sacrifices offered in their groves.

- (29) *And thou, terrific Bera, thunder-spirit,
Who, cloud o'ershadowed, on the mountains dwellest.* p. 303.

Bera, or Cellachvera, in the Celtic mythology, is represented as the goddess of thunder, and the producer of storms and torrents. She dwells on the highest mountains, and steps with ease from one mountain to another.

- (31) *The western tribes and the Morini. . .* p. 309.

The Morini were one of the Belgic tribes, who, about the year 350 before Christ, passing the Rhine and getting possession of the northern provinces of France, soon crossed the Channel, and dispossessed the ancient Celts of the coasts of Kent, Sussex, Hants, Dorset, and Cornwall. The Morini drove out or exterminated the Durotriges, the inhabitants of Dorset, and settled in their hill-cities, which are all remaining to this day.

- (32) *To attack Iscalia and Caer Ruth's strong towers. . .* p. 309.

Iscalia, Ilchester; Caer Ruth, the red city, Exeter.

- (33) *and the Cangî*
Join the revolt, that spreads on every side. . . p. 309.

Dr. Stukeley says, 'the Cangî were a numerous and powerful people in the time of Carausius, who dared now to rebel. They were extended all along the western coast of Somersetshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, as well as in North Wales. I apprehend he (Carausius) engaged them in Somersetshire, not far from Bath.'

In the additions to Camden, the Cangî are said to inhabit Somersetshire and the north part of Wiltshire.

The learned annotator on the county of Somerset is judiciously of opinion that Somersetshire and North Wilts are not to be ranked under the Belgæ, but the Cangî.

'Ostorius hastened to subdue the Cangî on the confines of Devon and Somersetshire.'—*Hist. de Wintonia*.

- (34) *They delicately walk and dance along*
To mellow flutes and organ-pipes. . . p. 310.

The mention of an organ among the Romans may, perhaps, be thought ridiculous by my readers, when many antiquarians assert, though very erroneously, that such an instrument was not known to the christianized Saxons at a much later period; it is, nevertheless, a fact, that the Romans were as well acquainted with the organ as the moderns of the present day.

'In a painting at Pisa, *copied from* an ancient ROMAN SCULPTURE, is a concert, in which appear a man playing on four bells; a female with a lyre; a figure with a trumpet, another with a violin, another playing the ORGAN, and a sixth, at the bottom, *blowing the bellows* attached to that instrument:—also, on the obelisk, two figures performing on separate organs, and nymphs dancing.'—From an extremely rare and valuable work in the British Museum, entitled *Artes et Métiers des Anciens, illustrés par des Monumens, &c. &c.*

- (35) *In vases that with rainbow splendour gleam. . . p. 310.*

'Britain was not now in the state in which the Romans found it. The natives had been ambitious to attain, and hence had not only built houses, temples, courts, and market-places in their towns, but had adorned them with porticoes, galleries,

baths, and saloons, and with mosaic pavements, and emulated every Roman improvement.'—*Anglo-Saxons*, vol. i. p. 223.

The Romans used glass cups and vases of every size, made in imitation of various kinds of precious stone.

'In the time of Martial, about a century after Christ, glass cups were common, except a peculiar kind of calices which displayed changeable or prismatic colours, which, as Vossius says, were procured in Egypt, and were so rare, that Adrian, sending some to Servianus, ordered that they should only be used on great occasions. The myrrhine vases, however, which were in such request, seem at last to have been successfully traced to China. Propertius calls them Parthian; and it seems certain that the porcelain of the east was called myrrha di Smyrna, to as late a date as 1555.'—*Pompeiana*.

- (36) *Our once bold, warlike youth
Are grown debased by Rome's pernicious manners,
And copy all her arts and soft refinements. . . p. 312.*

Tacitus asserts that Agricola, during his command in Britain, excited among the natives a taste for the Roman arts and customs; that their towns were embellished with stately temples and porticoes, and that the British youth imitated the fashions of Rome, learned her language, and applied to the study of eloquence and erudition.

- (37) *and prophets ran
Wildly about the streets, shouting her doom. . . p. 312.*

'It is said that, previous to the destruction of Camalodunum by Boadicea, the statue of Victory in the temple fell down of its own accord, with its back turned, as if it would pass to the enemy; and women, in a holy rage and extasie, prophetically sung that destruction was a coming; and dismal voices were heard in the council-house, and howlings and screechings in the theatre, Strange spectres walked in the neighbouring frith, the ocean looked of a bloody hue, and at low tide the shapes of dead bodies lay imprinted on the sands; all which prodigies raised hopeful expectations in the Britons, but, in the veterane soldiers, terroure and despair.'—*Brit. Antiq. Illustra.*

- (38) *Famed harpers of the holy hill of bards,
The halls of song, the city of the sun. . . p. 314.*

'We have found the Hyperborean "Island" (of Hecatæus)—

‘the remarkable round temple to Apollo in that island—the sacred precincts;’—but where is the city of the “HARPERS” of Apollo, without which the similitude would be incomplete? Now, what is the very name of Salisbury? Solis-bury, as we have before observed. Let us then turn to “the city” near the round temple and woody precincts. This is a city sacred to the same god. What god? the Sun! The temple, the city, and grove of Apollo are thus connected.

‘The Celtic bard and the Celtic harp, according to these ideas, never were and never could be the offspring of the uninstructed and rude aboriginal inhabitants of this island. The Phœnicians from Tyre, and subsequently from Carthage, or Cadiz, as they were the visitors, were the great instructors in Druidical discipline and solemnities, making these rites the more impressive, from a mixture of oriental pomp, on the imagination and hearts of those who flocked round “*the strangers of the distant land.*” And the harp of the bards was the harp struck in a strange land, such as it appears in the CAVERNS OF THEBES; as to Thebes we have referred the origin of the doctrine of the Druids.’—*Hermes Britannicus.*

As a confirmation of this, I shall copy the following from Richardson’s Travels, vol. i., ‘where he describes the tombs of Egypt:—‘Intermixed with the figures we frequently meet with the more agreeable pictures of entertainments, with music and dancing, and well-dressed people listening to the sound of the harp, *played by a priest* with his head shaved, and dressed in a loose, flowing, white robe, shot with *red stripes.*’ Here is the very robe of the Druids.

(39) *The home of shadows, blessed isles o’ the west.* . . p. 314.

Isacius Tzetzes calls the British isles (perhaps Mona and Anglesea) the Fortunate Islands; and says, it is reported the souls of the dead are carried thither. Milton and Sammes think that the above-mentioned islands were celebrated by the ancient poets under the name of the Fortunate Islands and the Elysian Fields.

(40) *Neigh of war-horse, trumpet-call,
O’er the midnight ocean rang.* . . p. 314.

‘Cæsar set sail from Gaul about midnight, and reached the coast of Britain at ten in the morning, August 26th, in the 53th year before the birth of Christ.’—*Sammes.*

‘Cæsar first landed in Britain on the 26th of August, about

five in the afternoon.'—See *Lowthorp's Abridgm. Philos. Trans.*, v. iii. p. 412.

- (41) *And creek of hoisted sail, and cry
Of sea-boy 'mid the shrouds on high.* . . p. 314.

Nauticus clamor.—*Virg. Æn.*, iii. ; *Luc.* ii.

- (42) *And climbs the flower-wreathed deck the rearward band.*
p. 315.

Virg. Æn. iv. 418.

- (43) *With horsemen ranged in threatening bands,
And warlike chariots rushing on between.* . . p. 316.

' And the cavalry of their (the British) armies consisted equally of horsemen and charioteers.'—*Whitaker*.

- (44) *The noblest palm of knighthood won.* . . p. 317.

' In omni Galliâ eorum hominum qui aliquo sunt numero atque honore genera sunt duo ;—alterum est Druidum, alterum *Equitum*.'—*Cæsar*.

Among the ancient Britons the Uchelwys, or Knights, held the next place to the king about his person.

- (45) *Display, ye Samnite gladiators, all
Your warlike sports with energy and skill.* . . p. 319.

' They (the Romans) wanted no manner of diversion while they were eating, having ordinarily music and antique dances, and, in ancient times, gladiators.'—*Romæ Antiquæ Notitia*.

' This emperor studied to adapt himself so much in *every thing* to the Roman genius, as is apparent in these and all his coins, and by his whole conduct.'—*Dr. Stukeley*.

- (46) *drink deeply all,
Lift high your rose-crowned cups.* . . p. 319.

From the Romans (and not from Rowena's drinking the health

of Vortigern, as is commonly supposed) came the custom of drinking healths. 'It was a kind of invocation to the gods and emperors, whose names they often mentioned, among their cups, with many good wishes.'

The Saxons had also their cup of Odin.

'The Romans used to drink to the health of one another thus, "*Bene mihi, bene vobis, &c.*" Plautus, Pers. Sometimes in honour of a friend or mistress; and used to take as many *cyathi* as there were letters in the name.—Tibull., Martial. The Greeks drank first in honour of their gods, and then of their friends; hence *Græco more bibere*, Cic. Verr.—*Roman Antiq.*

(47) *Raised round Bononia's port, to hem me in.* . . p. 321.

Boloign.

(48) *When here enthroned, near Vecta's isle.* . . p. 321.

Isle of Wight, derived from the British, Guithor or Guict, that is, the 'divorced,' or 'separated.'

(49) *Why then take off the heads
Of all those youths given by that stubborn tribe
To me as hostages.* . . p. 323.

'Touching the security, which the Romans required, of the loyalty of such people as they conquered, their manner was to take as hostages a sufficient number of male children of the chiefest men of that nation, whose lives depended upon their parents' fidelity, and ended with the first suspicion of rebellion.'—*Brit. Antiq. Illus.*

(50) *My funeral dirge were sung by weeping maids!* . . p. 323.

'Fingal commanded his bards; they sang over the death of Lorma. The daughters of Morven mourned her for one day in the year.'

'Go, with thy rustling wing, O breeze! sigh on Malvina's tomb: it rises yonder beneath the rock, at the blue stream of Lotha. The maids are departed to their place—that is the young virgins who sung the funeral elegy over her tomb.'—*Ossian.*

- (51) *The furious Parthians fought, rifting the air
With their terrific thunder-yells of war. . . p. 326.*

Plutarch says, that at the horrid din of war which the Parthians raised in battle, the Romans threw down their arms and fled.

- (52) *And we will shape our flight for Coitmaur's forest. p. 331.*

Selwood Forest, which once covered the greater part of Somersetshire.

- (53) *They heard my cries, and kindly sent a boat
Which took me from that death-rock. . . p. 332.*

'A similar circumstance actually occurred many years ago in Scotland. M'Lean of Duart, whose castle, now in ruins, stands on a promontory in Mull, it appears, hated his wife, though beautiful and virtuous, merely because she was barren. He placed her on a rock, which was covered at high tide, at the south end of the isle of Lismore, called to this day the Lady's Rock. She was saved by the crew of a vessel passing by, when she had given herself up for lost, and was conveyed to her brother at Inverary.'—*See a Companion and useful Guide to the Beauties of the Western Highlands, &c.*

- (54) *There, with those spirits who the wind
And tempests in their caverns bind. . . p. 337.*

Plutarch informs us, it is the belief of the Celtic nations, that the souls of their heroes, on quitting the body, roam on the winds and tempests.

- (55) *And join the mermaid's magic lay. . . p. 338.*

"Fon Oi-marra, the song of the mermaids."—*Cath-Loda, Duan II.*

- (56) *By that spectre-haunted tree. . . p. 339.*

'Amid their deep woods they (the Druids) had a stately old tree, with its branches lopped off, and the largest fixed to the body, expanding horizontally at the top, so as to cause the whole to resemble a T.'—*Muni. Antiq.*

- (57) *Grant, thou dim cloud-vestured spirit,
Thy son may thy death-sword inherit! . . . p. 340.*

'But remember, my son, to place this sword, this bow, the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow house, whose mark is one gray stone.'

'The hunter may find the steel, and say, "This has been Oscar's sword, the pride of other years."—*Temora*, b. i.

'Gaul went to his father's tomb to take the sword. His address to the spirit of the deceased hero is the subject of the following short poem.'—*Note to Temora*.

This custom of burying their swords with the ashes of the Celtic warriors was certainly either borrowed or brought with them from the east.

'And they shall lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone to hell (the grave), *with their weapons of war, and they have laid their swords under their heads*.—Ezekiel xxxii. 27.

'Awake, Angantyr! Hervor, the only daughter of thee and Suafu, doth awaken thee. Give me out of the tomb the hardened sword which the dwarfs made for Suafurlama.'—*Incantation of Hervo*—vide *Hervazer Saga*, Olai Vereti.

- (58) *In Rome's infernal prisons, where no beam
Of daylight comes to cheer her wretched captives. . . p. 346.*

The ergastula were dungeons where the Romans compelled their slaves to labour. Columella (l. i. c. 6) advises that they should be always built underground. Sicily was filled with ergastula, and was cultivated by slaves in chains. Eunus and Athenis caused the servile war, by breaking up these horrible prisons, and giving freedom to sixty thousand slaves.

- (59) *And by her side a peacock in all the radiant hues of the
living bird. . . p. 351.*

'Confarreatio was when the matrimonial rites were performed with solemn sacrifices, and offerings of burnt cakes by the Pontifex Maximus and the Flamen Dialis. This was the most solemn and sacred tie of the Roman marriages, according to Pliny lib. xviii. c. 2. No marriage was celebrated without consulting the auspices, and offering sacrifices to the gods, especially Juno, the goddess of marriage.'—*Tac. Ann.*, x. 27.

The emperor Adrian presented to the temple of Juno at Eubœa a crown of gold, a purple mantle, embroidered with the marriage of Hercules and Hebe in silver, and a large peacock, whose body was of gold, and his tail composed of gems resembling the natural colours of the bird.

(60) *Two fugitives at our high altar claim
Refuge and sanctuary. . . p. 352.*

‘Altars and temples afforded an asylum, or place of refuge, among the Greeks and Romans, as among the Jews. The Triumph-viri consecrated a chapel to Cæsar in the forum, on the place where he was burnt; and ordered that no person, who fled there for sanctuary, should be taken from thence to punishment. But the shrine of Julius was not always esteemed inviolable; the son of Antony was slain by Augustus, although he fled to it.—*Roman Antiquities*.

(61) *The immense temple of Aburi. . . p. 362.*

This once magnificent temple of Druidical worship the Rev. Lisle Bowles has cleared of those heaps of rubbish which ages and antiquarians had piled upon it, and satisfactorily proves it to have been a temple dedicated to Thoth or Teutates. It originally represented the complex figure of the circle and seraph with extended wings. Kircher is said to have preserved the following fragment from the Phœnician:—‘Jove is a figured circle; from it is produced a serpent: the circle shows the divine nature to be without beginning and without end; the serpent is his word, which animates the world, and makes it prolific; his wings are the Spirit of God, which gives motion to the whole system.’

(62) *Enter Chief Druid, with other Druids, and a Chorus of
Bards. . . p. 362.*

It is quite a mistaken notion which many entertain, that the Druids were all destroyed and banished from this island by the Romans. Sharon Turner, speaking of the first conquests of the Saxons in this island, says, ‘The majority of the Britons were professing Christianity, and had sent bishops to the councils on the continent. But Druidism, which yet had its regular temples

in Bretagne, was lingering in some corners of the island, and was still, by its traditions and mysticism, affecting the minds of the British bards of that period.

‘Gwalchmai, the son of Meilyer, wrote between the years 1150 and 1190. In his elegy upon the death of Madawe, Prince of Powys, the same bard exclaims—

“Och Duw na dodyeu
Dydd brawd, can deryw
Derwyddon weini nad—
Diwreciddiws Pywys peleidriad rhyvel !”

“Would to God the day of doom were arrived, since Druids are come attending the outcry ! The gleaming spears of war have eradicated Powys.”

‘The bard had heard a report of the fall of his prince, but he hoped it might be only a false rumour, till the news was brought by the Druids. Here then we find the existence of Druids in the middle of the twelfth century positively asserted.’—*Davis's Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*.

Selden, speaking of some ancient statues found in Germany, and supposed to be those of Druids, says, ‘They were six in number, and found at the foot of a mountain which, abounding with pines, was therefore called Piniferus, and in the German language Wichtelberg, upon the confines of Voiland, in a certain monastery. Being dug up and exposed to view, Conradus Celtes, who was present, in his judgment thought them to be figures of ancient Druids. They were seven feet in height, bare footed, their heads covered with a Greek hood, or cukil, with a budget by their side, and a beard descending to their very middle, and about their nostrils plaited out into two divisions. In their hands was a book, with a Diogenes' staff, which is supposed five feet in length ; a severe and morose countenance, with a downcast and sorrowful look, and their eyes fixed on the earth.

‘Thus early did Druidism decline in the island, not rooted up, as has been universally supposed, by the violence of a proscription, but undermined by the progress of Roman learning, and overborne by the irruption of Roman manners.’—*Whitaker's Manchester*.

(63) *Some few there are who, when our holy fires
Are lit amid this solemn temple, raised
To great TEUTATES, come to worship here. . . p. 363.*

‘The Celts popularly worshipped Mercury, that is, ΤΗΟΤΗ, DU TAITH, the God of Commerce, that led the seamen over the

deep—the unfolders of the starry heavens, and the teacher of the DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY. He who taught immortality might naturally appear as the conductor of the dead and restorer of life.—*Bowles's Hermes Britannicus*.

In Niebuhr's plates of those tombs, discovered by him in a desert near Mount Sinai, is the representation on one of them of the gates of Hades, with the figure of Hermes, or Mercury, half concealed by the door, who, having opened the entrance, and introduced the spirits of the dead, forbids, with his serpent-bound rod of office, any intrusion into the eternal and secret mansions of the departed.

Lucan speaks of Teutates as one of the chief deities of the Gauls and Britons, to whom human sacrifices were offered.

—— immitis placatum sanguine diro
Theutates.

(64) *By the red strangers to our island brought.* . . p. 363.

'The Phœnician lives in Cornish legend, and in the Welsh triads, under the figure of a "red and bony giant," *Ruddhun Gawr*.'—*Miles's Deverel Barrow*.

Havillan, an ancient Celtic bard, writing of the mingled race of Phœnician and British blood in Cornwall, says that 'their spectacles, or public games, in honour of their gods, were the slaughter of men, and that they drank of their blood.' This perfectly accords with the Canaanite priests, who 'ate the sacrifice of the dead.'

(65) *These vast pillars faintly shadow forth
Circles of space, eternity, and time!* . . p. 364.

'Davis says, the Druids divided the whole existence into *three* circles:—1. *Cylch y Cengant*, the circle of space, which God alone pervades; 2. *Cylch yr Abred*, the circle of courses, evidently, as I should interpret it, the CIRCLE of the course of time; and in corroboration of this, we have remarked the stones are *twelve*—months; days of each month, *thirty*.

'It appears to me, looking at the precise number of these stones, natural to conclude that they stand the great emblems of—what? TIME and ETERNITY; that the twelve stones are the zodiacal signs of the Egyptian Hermes, the Celtic Teuth, the aboriginal Thoth.'—*Bowles's Her. Brit.*

- (66) *Yon circle holds three stones, which typify
The MIGHTY ONES, the dread CABIRI named. . . p. 364.*

‘At Abury stand **THREE STONES** in the middle of one circle; what are these? the three Mighty ones—the Cabiri—unde Abiri. What is the great solitary stone in the other centre, called by Stukeley the obelisk, and which was higher than all the others? The Celtic Taute.’—*Hermes Britannicus*.

‘Still the secret worship was of one infinite God, whose representation was the’ (great) ‘circle.’ “He sitteth on the circle of the earth. *Isaiah*.”—*Bowles*.

‘It would, indeed, seem that both the British Druids and the *Saxon Pagans* had as high a sense of the Supreme Deity, as some of the Orphic verses show to have existed in some of the minds of ancient Greece.’—*Anglo-Saxons*.

‘Sanconiatho, the Phœnician, speaking of *Hermes Trismegistos* (or Thoth), says, “For thus much himself confesseth—Deus omnium Dominus et Pater, fons et vita, potentia et lux et mens et spiritus; et omnia in ipso et sub ipso sunt. Verbum enim ex esse prodiens, perfectissimum existens, et generator et opifex, &c.”

‘Among the Druids one only awful mystery was the object of their ceremonies, whilst the Celts in general, “*omni Galliâ*,” had the gods of thunder, of light, of battle, besides their great Taute, the *maximus Mercurius*.’—*Hermes Britannicus*.

- (67) *This lofty spire
Stands the TEUTATES; he to whom this Bethel. . . p. 364.*

Col. Vallency, *Reb. Hib.*, vol. ii.

- (68) *Who, in a land of mysteries, far from hence,
Counted the golden stars. . . p. 364.*

The worship of Teutates was derived from the Egyptians, and perhaps came from them, through the Phœnicians, to the British isles.

‘In Polwhele’s *History of Cornwall*, is a quotation singularly illustrative of the Celts deriving, from the Phœnician and Egyptian mythology, the circle and serpent as symbolical of the god of the world.’

‘Zus hu asphira, &c.—in Welch, Sws, &c.

'Zws is a mighty sphere, producing a circle ; in it the earth revolves. The mighty sphere shows the course of the Self-puissant One ; the nature of his inherent wisdom illuminates the seal of animation (the world), thence made prolific ; to make it ascend is the mighty breath of the Self-puissant, which sets in motion the whole animated system.'—*Hermes Britannicus*.

'Indubitable circumstances prove that in Egypt was worshipped one infinite, eternal Being, without beginning or end, the maker of the world, symbolized under the form of the sacred serpent Gneph.'—*Hermes Britannicus*.

(69) *From the tempest-shook isles of the far distant West.* p. 366.

The Scilly Isles.

(70) *From the cloud-compassed blood-cape, around whose dim steep*

Dash the storm-lifted waves of the foam-covered deep. p. 367.

Bolerium—the Land's End, called by the British bards Pen-ring-huaed, the promontory of blood.

(71) *From Carn-brê's oak groves and her granite-piled hills.*

p. 367.

Carn-brê, a celebrated place of Druidical worship ; vide Bor-lase. 'Taron-wy, according to the Triads, is a divinity, whose simulacrum was an oak-tree ; and he is mentioned as the god of thunder by Taliessin.'—*Note to Hermes Britannicus*.

(73) *From the bright-gleaming sun-fire on Purbeck's high mount.* p. 367.

Pur-beck, the house of the sun, the seat of the eternal fire, like Heliopolis of Asia. At Bal-bee was erected the grand Purathea to the sun. There can be little doubt that this eternal fire was on the isolated and lofty caph or mount, on which now stand the Saxon ruins of Corph, or Corfe, castle.

(74) *The dun-coloured roes on the banks of the Vur.* . . p. 367.

The British name of the Frome, which forms, on one side, the Isle of Purbeck.

- (75) *Bring flowers, bring branches of vervain and oak,
To cast on the flames as the gods ye invoke. . . p. 368.*

The following lines, translated by Barnabe Googe in 1570 (see Strutt), have a reference to Druidical rites, preserved from age to age, on Midsummer-eve.

' Then doth the joyful feast of John the Baptist take his turne,
When bonfiers great with loftie flame in every towne doe burne :
And yong men round about with maides doe daunce in every
streete,
With garlands wrought of mother-wort, or else with vervaine
sweete ;
And many other flowers faire, with violets in their handes,
Whereas they all do fondly thinke that whosoever stands,
And thorow the flowers beholds the flame, his eyes shall feel no
paine.
When thus till night they daunced have, they *through the fire
amaine*
With striving mindes doe run, and all their herbes they cast
therein,
And then, with wordes devout and prayers they solemnely begin,
Desiring God that all their ills may there confounded be,
Whereby they thinke through all that yeare from agues to be
free.'

- (76) *Waking echoes more tuneful than Sul's golden lyre. p. 368.*

The British name of Apollo, or the sun.

- (77) *The mystic writings of the twisted branch, ?
Known only to our sacred order. . . p. 369.*

' The word *aos* in Irish, which first signified a tree, was applied to a learned person ; and *seadha*, woods or trees, became the term applied to prophets or wise men, undoubtedly from their knowledge of the alphabet, or sylvan character. The learning of the sprigs consisted in arranging, tying, and intertwining them in various ways, thereby altering their expression or import. Small branches of different trees were fastened together, and, being placed in the tablet of devices, were read by sages who were versed in sciences. The art of tying the sprigs in numerous and intricate knots was an important part of the mystical studies of

the Druidical order, and appears to have been known by few.—
The Scottish Gæil, or Celtic Manners.

- (78) *the sacred crown*
Of great Dunvallo, who the golden round
Of sovereignty first wore in Britain's land. . . p. 370.

Dunvallo, or Molmutius, is, by some old British writers, said to be the first who was installed with rites and ceremonies of coronation, and that wore at his inauguration a crown.

The Irish kings wore golden crowns long before the introduction of Christianity into that island. Some of them have been dug up out of the bogs.

- (79) *Now stand thou by the pillar of the king. . . p. 370.*

‘Behold the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was.’—
2 Kings xi. 14.

‘The king or chieftain, according to the most ancient usages, standing by the pillar in the midst, and the great officers standing by their respective pillars, in their proper stations around him.’—
Muni. Antiq.

‘In the isle of Ila there was fixed a large stone seven feet square, in which there was a cavity, or deep impression, made to receive the feet of Mac Donald, who was crowned king of the isles. Standing on this stone, he swore that he would continue his vassals in the possession of their lands, and do exact justice to all his subjects; and then his father's sword was put into his hand, and the bishop of Argyle and seven priests anointed him king, in presence of all the heads of the tribes in the isles and continent; and at the same time an orator rehearsed a catalogue of his ancestors.’—See *Martin's Description of the Western Isles.*

Of the original custom of chieftains standing, on certain great occasions, by a pillar, or at or upon a stone, says King, there are also many most ancient proofs on record.

Such a stone was the ancient one of Scone, on which the kings of Scotland were crowned, brought from Ireland, and on which, to this day, the kings of England sit at their coronation.

- (80) *Ye know 'tis death, by our most sacred laws,*
To all who dare within yon bounds to come. . . p. 371.

These sacred boundaries are still to be seen round the Celtic

temples. Moses erected similar barriers round Mount Sinai, to keep off the common people.

- (81) *Blaspheming wretch ! the gods, not we, demand
The victim's life, as their just right who gave it. . . p. 372.*

'The original principle' (of human sacrifices) 'was this, that nothing could be too valuable to be offered to God. The principle was surely good, but, when carried to excess, bad.'—*Higgins's Celtic Druids.*

- (82) *So that sweet modest plant of other climes. . . p. 373.*

'The cactus grandiflorus, or the night-blowing Cereus, which opens its exquisite perfume to the night, but closes before the morning, not to be seen again perhaps for years.' As Ambrosius is supposed to have been a considerable traveller, I hope this simile will not, by the critical reader, be considered out of character.

- (83) *Constantius' fleet hath in the ocean mist
Escaped the British navy. . . p. 383.*

'The Roman fleet escaped the British in a fog, which lay at the Isle of Wight ; and, as soon as the soldiers were landed, Constantius set fire to all the ships, that they might confide in nothing but their own valour.'

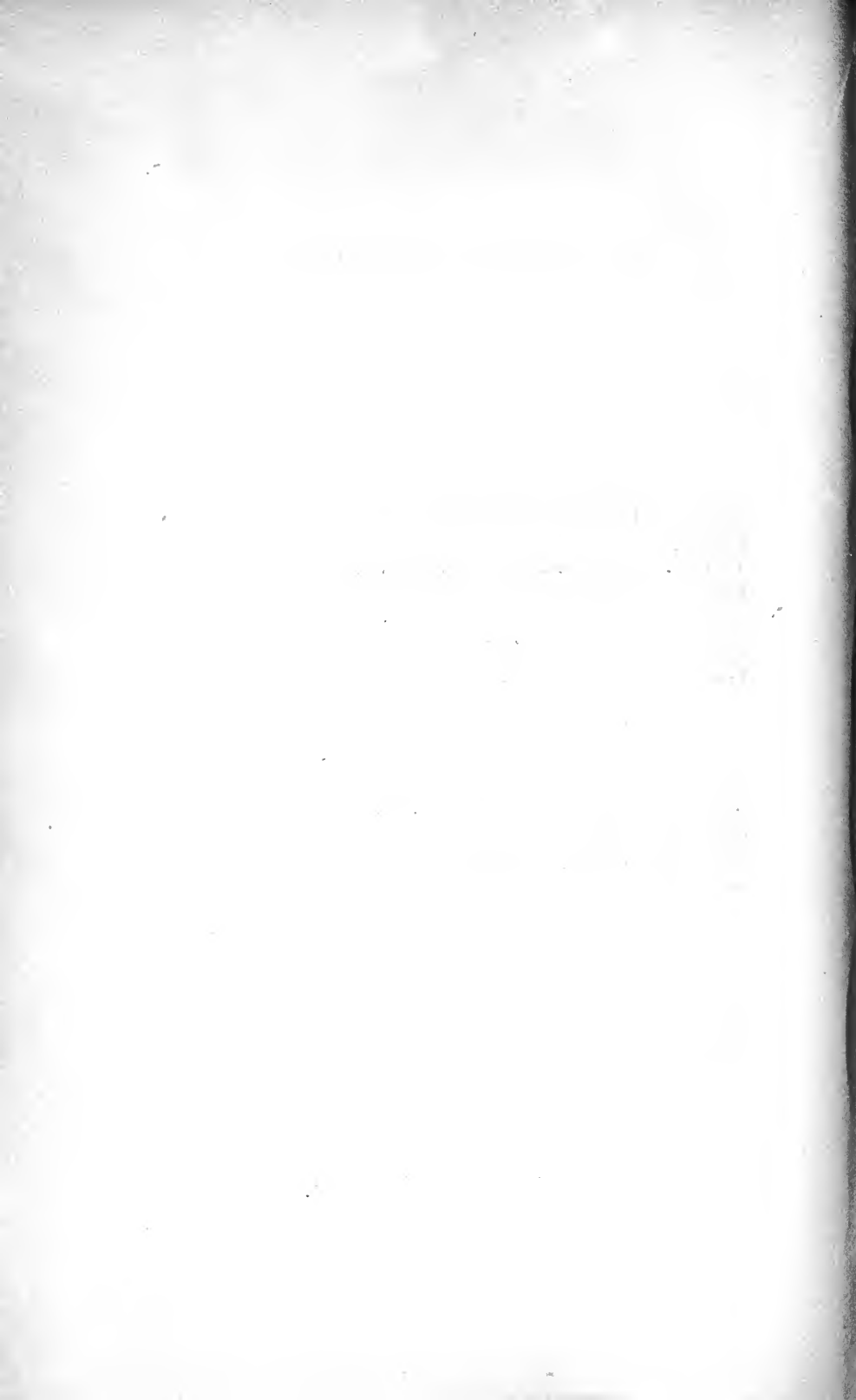
The death of Carausius is according to history, which some say took place at York.



THE DRAGON-KING.

A TRAGEDY.

‘Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the *manners* of the times, who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he *must* represent his actors as believing them.’—HORACE WALPOLE.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BRITONS.

ARTHUR PEN-DRAGON, the Pen-teyrn, or Chief King of Britain.

MOURIC MEDRAWD.

MERIDOC, Governor of Sorbiodunum.

MERLIN, the British Prophet.

CLYDOC, } Knights of the Round Table.
RODERIC, }

Citizen.

1st Plebeian. 2nd Plebeian. 3rd Plebeian.

Old Man. Young Man.

Officer.

GWENYFAR, Queen to Arthur.

IMOGENIA, Sister to the British King

SAXONS.

CERDIC, King of West Saxnaland, founder of the English Empire.

KENRICK, the Ætheling, or Prince, his Son.

ORIC, King of Kent.

CISSA, King of the South Saxons.

PORTA, a Saxon Chief, founder of the Saxon Keep-tower at Porchester Castle.

WITHGAR.

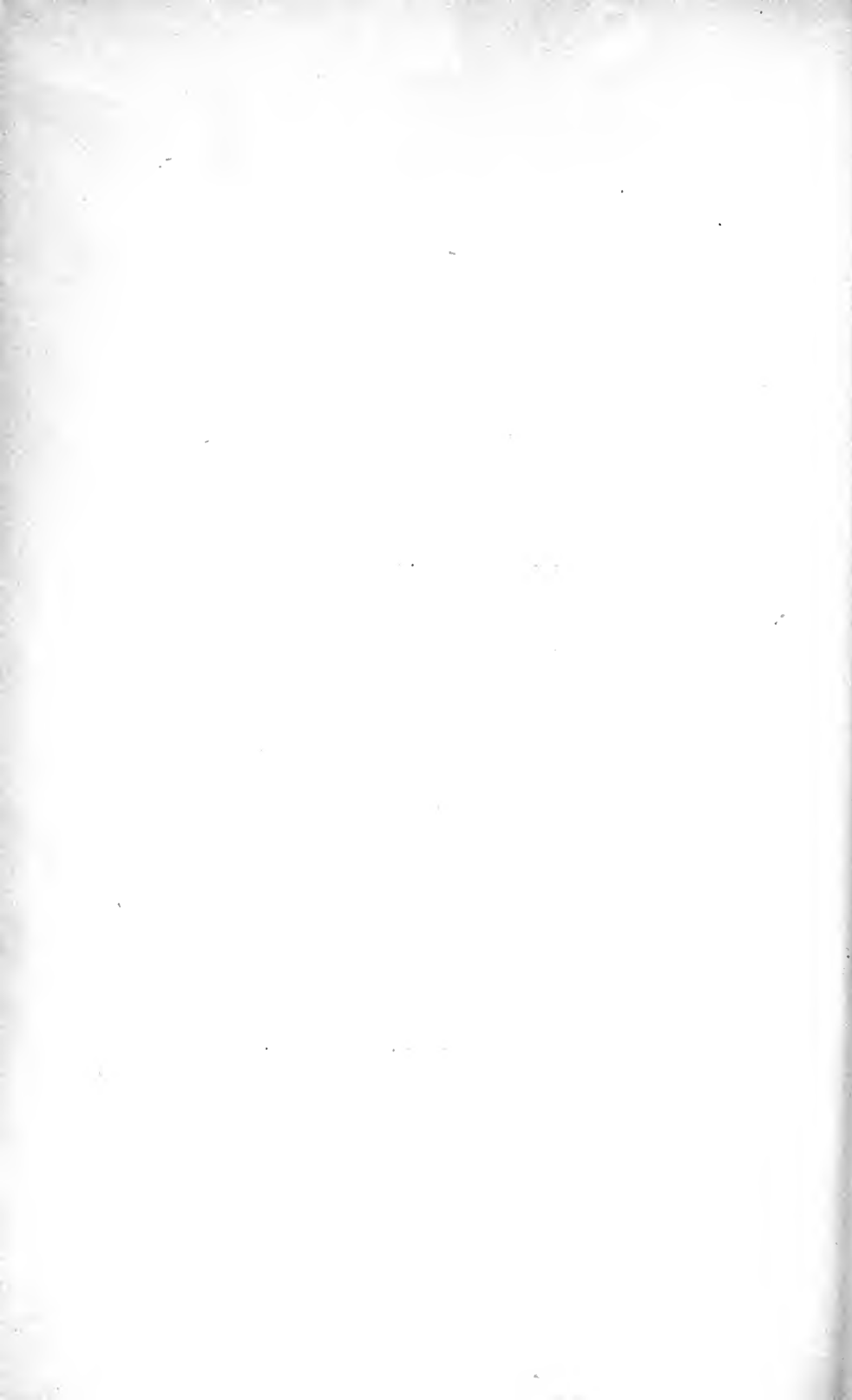
Priest.

Officer.

HELGA.

1st Adelfruna, 2nd Adelfruna. 3rd Adelfruna. 4th Adelfruna.
5th Adelfruna.

British and Saxon Soldiers, Officers, &c.



THE DRAGON-KING.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Pavilion of Cerdic in the Saxon Camp,
near Sorbiodunum.*

Shouts, cymbals, trumpets, and clashing of spears (1).

*Enter Cerdic in a Triumphal Car of Shields, hung
with Garlands, and borne by Saxon Soldiers (2), fol-
lowed by Kenrick, Cissa, Oric, Porta, Chiefs, and
Warriors. Cerdic descends from the Car, and the
Soldiers resume their shields of which it was formed.*

CERDIC.

THANKS, gallant followers! ye have set the crown
Of a new kingdom on these war-scathed brows, (3)
Which to establish in this sea-locked isle,
This ocean-paradise, we, with our host
Of battle-loving and illustrious warriors,
Crossed the wild turmoil of the stormy deep,
Resolved to find an honourable grave,
Or to our sons, throughout all time, transmit
A fair inheritance among these Britons.

ALL.

Hail, to great Cerdic! All hail, king o' th' west!

CERDIC.

God of Valhalla! whose immortal blood

Flows in these veins, bear witness, I now swear
To observe the laws, defend my new-won power
On every side extend my kingdom's limits,
Revenge my people's injuries on their foes,
Long as this arm my war-old brand can wield ;
And in this isle some gloried deed achieve,
Which shall transmit mine and my people's name
To all succeeding ages with renown. (4)

KENRICK.

Let me be one among the first to hail
My father sovereign of West Saxnaland !
Thou hast already, potent chief, performed
An act which will transmit thy honoured name,
In Saxon legends, to the end of time.
Thy new-won victories o'er the numerous host
By Nazanleod led from many realms (5)
In this fair isle, has on a lasting throne
Established thee, and made thy fame immortal
As our great father-gods ! (6)

CERDIC.

Yes, he is fallen,
With all his ranks, and all his men of might,
Whom I devoted to the god of war, (7)
The splendid city of Belgarium's mine,
With all its temples, palaces, and towers,
And Saxon gods are in its stately fanes—
Where late the Christians worshipped—now adored ; (8)
Henceforth that noble city shall be called
Win-ceaster, and be made the regal seat
Of our increasing empire.

KENRICK.

Thou hast planted
A scion of the immortal tree of Odin,

Which there is firmly rooted, and shall flourish,
Watered with streams of British blood, till all
Its glorious branches o'er the isle extend,
And every clan and tribe, united, claim
Its shadow and its shelter!—I am one
Who minister before great Odin's shrine, (9)
And gods and spirits, whom I oft consult,
By our famed father's runes and magic spells, (10)
Have, in mysterious songs, amid the temple,
Chanted dominion, power, and boundless glory
To Cerdic and his line, whose ancient house (11)
Has for its founder our chief god himself. (12)

PORTA.

I heed no omens, nor have faith in spells.
My sword and battle-axe are all the gods
To whom I homage yield—they, and the strength (13)
Of this unshrinking arm, have won me rule
On yonder southern coast.—May I my shield
In battle lose, if I do not defy
These gods and goddesses!—I ask nor fear
Aught from their power, nor do I heed the creeds
Of Christian or of Pagan. (14)

CERDIC.

Thou art brave,
And in the war-van thy bright anlace is
Foremost to strike the foe; but, by the white
And holy steed of prophecy, I swear
It is not good thus to despise the gods: (15)
I would not hear our deities insulted.

PORTA.

Let those believe who may your fancied gods,
I, lord of shields, only believe in him

Who made yon sun, the fulgent torch of heaven,
Our mother earth, and all that I behold. (16)

ORIC.

Kenrick, the princely priest, hath prophesied
His sons shall be the greatest in this isle,
The proud Bretwaldas of the Saxon realms; (17)
But never will the line of Hengist, who
First planted on these shores the white-horse banner,
Be vassal kings to any lord that reigns.

KENRICK.

If, king of Kent, the gods have so decreed,
In vain will be an arm of flesh upraised,
To oppose the destiny of unborn years.

PORTA.

King Cerdic and Etheling well may urge
Devoted reverence to the gods, since they,
A sacred race, are their immediate sons;
What should prevent themselves from being gods?
And if they are, let them be worshipped too
With incense, sacrifice, and holy song.

CISSA.

Much I revere the gods, but still I worship
The goddesses with deeper heart-devotion—
I mean the goddesses of this green isle.—
Brighter than she who in her fairy bowers
Weeps golden tears, and reigns the queen of love, (18)
Are British maids. Nine to the bridal couch
Have I already led, with star-like eyes
And ruby lips, sweet as the blood-red wine.
But which shall have the honour, when my corse
Lies, in its glory, on the funeral pyre,
To blend with mine her ashes in the flames,
And at the war-feast on my spirit wait,

In Odin's halls of splendour may I die,
Mud-suffocated, a base coward's death,
If I can tell,—so much I love them all. (19)

CERDIC.

Hast thou not led them to bow down the knee
Before great Odin's image?

CISSA.

No, not one,
By my good sword and shield.

CERDIC.

By the white horse,
I would not have a son of mine espouse
A Christian maid, though on her head were placed
The crown of all the Christian realms on earth!

KENRICK.

Ah, Imogenia! what will be thy fate
If thou consent not to renounce thy creed!—(*Aside.*)

PORTA.

Not if she were descended from *their* gods?
Why what a splendid union that would be!
And then their heirs of half the world might win
The sceptre and the worship;—then thy line
Might be the gods of earth, if not of heaven.

CERDIC.

My gallant chiefs, let no dissensions rise
To mar our triumph, and the progress check
Of victory's proud career.—The raven and wolf
Are feeding on the flesh of Nazanleod,
And all his helmed nobles; but there lives
A greater prince than he—the DRAGON-KING, (20)
Arthur, renowned in battle, and the songs
Of all the British bards.—That mighty chief,
Who o'er the princes of this sea-girt isle

Dominion holds, is gathering far and near
A numerous host! stern-minded sons of battle,
Who well have learnt to handle sword and spear

KENRICK.

Let them advance, like the deep snows that rush
Down from the northern sun-smote mountain-steeps,
We earlessly will meet them, where grim Slaughter
His thunder and his arrowy tempest pours,
And lay them silent as those mountain snows
Sleep on the ruined valley!

CERDIC.

Brave my son,
Well hast thou spoken.—But this British king
Hastens, I've learnt, to meet us, ere we take
His strong and lofty hold of Sorbiodunum;
Where tower on tower, and wall on wall uplift
Their battlements to heaven.—I counsel then
That we haste onward, and those walls begird
With bristled spear and lance; that when he comes
He may behold—if the proud city yield
Not to our summons, nor unfold her gates—
Their tumbling fragments, blackened by the flames,
And in his halls, that shine with Roman pomp,
Meet the stern wolf and bear, with bloody jaws,
Feasting upon the dead.

Enter Withgar.

WITHGAR.

Breaker of shields,
Giver of bracelets to the valiant, we
A village, forest-bosomed, have discovered
In yonder vale, through which our host must pass

To reach the lofty city of the west ;
'Tis filled with British vassals, who dispute
Our progress with their swords.

CERDIC.

Son of the battle,
Some chosen troops lead to dislodge the foe,
But grant their lives if they as captives yield.

[*Exit Withgar.*]

CISSA.

I will go mingle with the fight, my lord.

ORIC.

And so will I.

PORTA.

Nor can I stay behind,
Though 'tis a fray unworthy of my sword.

[*Exeunt Cissa, Oric, and Porta.*]

KENRICK.

I too would gaze upon this scene of strife,
And be a witness of thy soldiers' valour.

CERDIC.

Stay, Kenrick, I must talk with thee alone.

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Great king of earls, the Britons do refuse
To yield themselves, or let thy army pass,
While one remains alive.

CERDIC.

Go, bid yon bowmen
Discharge a shower of arrows winged with fire (21)
Against the village ;—we'll burn out these wasps
From their wood-sheltered nest. [*Exit Officer.*]

My son, there hangs

A cloud upon thy brow, which not the joy
Of conquest, and of rising empires won
In this delightful isle, I see, can banish.
Of late I've marked thee—marked thy pensive mien,
Thy lonely wanderings in the groves, as if
The singing bowers of birds and haunt of streams
Were far more pleasing than the soldier's camp—
As if the love-sick turtle's murmuring voice
And sorrow-warbled notes of nightingales,
Soothing the moonlit dreaminess of eve,
Were sweeter music to thine ear become,
Than the soul-stirring swell of stormy trump
And cymbal-clamour, calling men to battle.

KENRICK.

Nay, most redoubted sire——

CERDIC.

Nay, gentle son,
Thou seem'st to copy these voluptuous Britons,
These Romanized and wanton islanders,
Who, sunk in luxuries and idle pomp,
Became rank cowards, and imploringly
Protection of the hardy Saxon sought,
For home and life, against fierce robber hordes.
Remember in the veins of British slaves
Flow their proud masters' blood, the blood of Romans !
Who Odin drove, the father of our race,
From his dominions in the eastern climes. (22)

KENRICK.

So have I heard, my lord.

CERDIC.

Hear it again,
And hearing it, remember too, my son,

Offspring of gods, he kindled in the hearts
Of all the free-born nations of the north
A never-dying fire of fierce revenge !
And onward still she poured her armies forth,
Legion on legion, till through Rome's proud streets
They, like red lava-torrents, swept away
Her sons and palaces in one vast ruin !
And she who sat on her imperial throne,
The splendid queen of nations, wept in blood
Her former mighty triumphs, as she sank,
Shrieking, amid destruction's crimson flames !

KENRICK.

What would your words imply ?

CERDIC.

That thou, the son
Of Odin, ne'er must wed with one whose veins
Are tainted with the hateful blood of Romans !

KENRICK.

Alas ! my father——

CERDIC.

Ah, I know thy heart,
And its base fondness for a captive maid,
This British Arthur's sister, whom thou took'st
A veiled vestal from some neighbouring abbey !—
Thou must not wed her, for she is a Christian,
And Roman blood contaminates her line.

KENRICK.

Shield of the Saxons, stir not up thy wrath
When I for that fair Christian maid declare
A love beyond all bounds !—Well do I know
'Tis a disgrace to one of Odin's line ;
And I have striven, since first the hour these eyes
Gazed on her matchless beauty, to despise her.

CERDIC.

Weak-hearted youth ! pursue that noble course,
And thou wilt be the conqueror of thyself,
A greater glory than to win a kingdom !

KENRICK.

Hear me, my honoured father !—Well you know
Since you my snow-white shield of expectation (23)
Placed in my hands, and girded on my thigh
The envied sword of knighthood, never has (24)
The fiercest tide of battle made me turn
My back upon the foe, or lose my shield,
On which thou hast permitted me to bear
The impress of the eagle !—War, my lord, (25)
And my high ministry at Odin's shrine
Have still engrossed my heart ; but now I own——

CERDIC.

'Tis weakness—'tis the indulgence of a passion
Which thou shouldst scorn—which on thy shield's re-
fulgence
Casts a dark stain !—Bear thou in mind the eagle
Emblazoned on its field, and soar above
Passion's dim cloud and tempest, like that bird
Of kingly power, into the sunny blaze
Of fame, imperishable as the stars,
That through eternity's unfathomed depths
In midnight splendours flash !

KENRICK.

Ah, my torn heart —
Yes, I with clang of trump and cymbalon,
And the loud hurly of tumultuous war,
The touching voice of gentle love will drown !—
Yet in the roar of battle still will shine

Her beauty on my soul, like mid-day suns
Bursting in glory through the thunder storm !

CERDIC.

Hence with such folly !—Ill doth it become
The son and priest of Odin !—What is love
Or beauty, when compared with honour, fame,
And martial glory ?—

KENRICK.

Nothing, nothing, nothing !

I yield her up—I banish from my heart
Her peerless image, formed to be adored
And worshipped as a goddess !

CERDIC.

Ah, I see

Thou canst not of her speak but in such terms
As do betray the infirmness of thy heart.

KENRICK.

Nay, good my lord, though I cannot forget
That the bright sun-smiles of her loveliness
Have on the dim and thorny path of life
A transient glory shed, yet shall they not
Seduce me from my duty, or the road
To fame and greatness ; her transcendent charms
Will be to me through all hereafter time
But a bright vision of departed bliss :
I am like one who dreams of fairy-land,
Its rosy bowers thronged with the beautiful
Of shape and feature, in their dazzling pomp,
And to the dull realities of life
Wakes with regretful memory.

CERDIC.

Then will soon
Her form from thy remembrance fade away,

Like the pale star that lingers last in heaven,
When from the ruby-portals of the east
Looks laughing forth the golden-vested morn.

KENRICK.

Never, till on the light of memory and of life
Death flings the eternal shadows of the tomb!—(*Aside.*)

CERDIC.

To end at once thy weakness, mark me, son !
I have devoted her to Odin's shrine,
A noble sacrifice, if I subdue (26)
The lofty tower-crowned city of the west——
Ha! that pale brow of death!—Why stand'st thou thus,
Withered with horror, like a flame-scorched victim ?
Is this thy conquest o'er that passion-spell
Which chains thy soaring spirit down to earth ?
Well did I deem no other way was there
To break the potent charm—and, ere the trump
Its battle-song awoke, I gave command
Such honours as become a victim deemed
Most worthy war's dread god, should in our halls
Wait on the worshipped maid. (27)

KENRICK.

A victim ! doomed

To bleed at Odin's shrine !—O horrible !—
It shall not be !—Hear me, my father, hear
Thy wretched son implore, on bended knee——

CERDIC.

I will not hear !—Thy knee in such a cause
Yields but disgraceful homage—rise, ere I,
Wild in my wrath, the curses of the gods
On thee call down !—Plead not in her behalf,
Or I shall count thee as no son of mine,
But a base niggard slave ! (28)

KENRICK.

Ha ! niggard slave !—

Ye gods ! must I endure such foul reproach ?—

O, wert thou not my sire——

CERDIC.

Nay, fret and chafe,

And knit thy stormy brows—shall I be moved

At thy weak indignation ?

KENRICK.

Down, proud heart !—

I must this fierce resentment curb, or lose

All hope of joy on earth (*Aside.*)—Yet hear me, sire !

I vow in solemn awe by my broad shield,

By Odin's throne ! if thou this captive princess,

Without whom 'tis impossible, I feel,

And feeling dare to own, that I can live ;—

If thou wilt but relent, and give this maid

'To me in marriage, I will take yon city,

And be the first from her strong towers to fling

The white steed's banner-folds, or in her breaches,

Mid blood-drenched piles of slaughtered Britons, fall—

Whom I devote to Odin, a redemption

For Imogenia's life ! (29)

CERDIC.

What, shall a son

Of Cerdic wed a Christian ?—Never, never !

KENRICK.

She will abjure her faith in Christian creeds.

CERDIC.

If not, she dies, by all my hopes of conquest !—

Though that same hour—all ill betide her beauty !—

In which she falls thou too shouldst perish with her !

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Lord of the Saxons, flames have circled all
Yon village, and the forest is on fire,
But not a Briton from the conflagration
Rushes to save his life.

CERDIC.

Are they so brave,
To fall with their loved homes rather than yield?
Lead me to witness such heroic firmness,
Ere I believe it true. *[Exeunt Cerdic and Officer.]*

KENRICK.

Vain are resolves!—
I thought I could resign her, till I found
That she, the loveliest of her sex, was doomed
An offering to the gods.—She shall not die,
If the most ardent, most devoted love
Can win and save her!—Die!—O, what to me
Would be the wealth of empires, or renown,
Though, like a constant star, through the long course
Of distant years my name should brightly shine,
Without my Imogenia!—O, true love
Can ne'er be quenched—deeply I feel it cannot!—
'Tis like the unchanging and eternal sun
That sheds on all things a voluptuous glory;
Tempests and clouds may oft its splendours hide,
Yet still it shines in its own radiant sphere,
And daylight flings o'er earth through all her storms.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.—*A Wooded Country. At a distance, a Village in Flames, which extend to the surrounding Forest.*

Enter Cissa, Oric, Porta, and Cerdic, Chiefs and Soldiers.

CERDIC.

And has there not a Briton yet been seen
To issue from the flames?

ORIC.

Not one, my lord.

They fought, like men, with arrow, sword, and lance,
Against o'erwhelming force, till the red fires
Fastened, like hungry lions, on their huts;
Fainter and fainter then grew their hoarse shouts,
Till fell, amid the flames, the last brave man,
And perished with the home that gave him birth!

PORTA.

A noble sacrifice to Cerdic's gods!
Since they, as he believes, are pleased to view
The mangled carcasses of human beings,
And, like a herd of famished wolves, delight
To snuff the savoury fumes of burning blood.

CERDIC.

Porta, thou dost blaspheme the gods I serve,
And, scorning holy mysteries, art become
The very child of folly. By my shield,
This is a great example to us all!
Such manliness doth merit a renown
Immortal! Britons, this one noble act
Redeems your island from its old reproach

Of cowardice and slavery to the Picts.
It sets you far above the Roman name,
And all the patriot deeds of ancient glory !
Britons, I must acknowledge ye are men,
Worthy to cope with Saxons !—On, my friends ;
Prepare our march for Sorbiodunum's towers. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Roman Hall in the Palace of Sorbiodunum.*

Enter Mouric, Medrawd, and Melva.

MOURIC.

Melva, are those fleet steeds prepared without
The city gates, which are to bear us hence
From this devoted palace with the queen ?

MELVA.

They stand, my prince, concealed amid the shades
Of a thick grove, in yonder western vale.

MOURIC.

'Tis well ! We must be speedy, for the king,
Arthur Pen-dragon, is advancing on us,
With a strong host of hardy warriors, gathered
From Gwynedd and Dehewbarth's mountain-lands, (30)
From Pen-cair to Penringhaued's blood-stained cape. (31)
But he, I deem, will be too late to save
This city from the Saxons, or his queen
From my enamoured arms. Melva, she comes ;—
Retire, and wait without the palace gates. [*Exit Melva.*

Enter Gwenyfar.

All things are ready for our instant flight.

GWENYFAR.

Ah, Mouric, gentle youth, too fondly loved,
The eventful hour is come, and now I shrink
With wild alarm and terror from the verge
Of this dread precipice which yawns before us !
I must not leap the frightful gulf of shame,
And be an outcast, an abandoned wretch,
The scorn of earth and heaven ! Oh, leave me, leave me,
While yet one ray of virtue dawns to light
My wandering steps to honour and to peace.

MOURIC.

Leave thee ? No, never ! Is thy love to me
Grown on the sudden cold ?—Ah, Gwenyfar,
I thought thy passion ardent as my own,
And that its all-controlling power had silenced
This cold reluctance, as the ocean's voice
The sea-boy's death-cry drowns.

GWENYFAR.

Ah, 'tis, I fear,
Virtue's faint death-cry, her last feeble struggle,
Amid this passion's wild, unruly storm !
If thou art noble, save me from myself,
Nor, like the fierce, remorseless surges, sink
My shipwrecked fame and honour. Though I cannot
Cease to regard thee with the fondest love,
Too amiable, enchanting, gallant youth, (32)
Yet let me bury in my heart this flame,
Like a sepulchral light hid from the world,
Till death shall quench the fire, nor to mankind
Proclaim my guilty shame.

MOURIC.

What is the world,
Its censure, or its scorn, to those who love

As we do? In each other's fond embrace
Centres our world, with all its bliss and glory.
The warrior's fame, the monarch's power and state,
When placed in competition with thy smiles,
To me are despicable as the flame
Of the red-burning oak, when with the sun
In all its earth-enlightening pomp compared!

GWENYFAR.

And shall I leave my husband? that brave prince,
The pillar of the Cymry, on which leans,
Its sole support, the empire of the Britons!
When harassed, too, by host of savage foes,
Which ocean's tide casts on our frightened shores,
Increasing, like his billows with the storm,
And threatening to destroy us!

MOURIC.

Has not he
Left thee, my Gwenyfar, for distant wars,
Against his kinsmen waged, for lust of fame
And idle glory, which he fain would win,
Though the red sword dispeopled half his realms?
Left thee exposed to the fierce Saxon's wrath,
Which knows not any mercy?—Who, now flushed
With their late victory o'er the bravest men
Britain e'er looked on in her bannered fields,
Are hastening to besiege these Roman towers, (33)
And this fair city, queen of all the west,
Smite with the sword, till none remain to wail
O'er the dark fragments of her smoking walls!

GWENYFAR.

Alas, bright city! I for thee must weep.
Shall this proud palace be a heap of dust,
And the fierce sword rush through her gates in blood?

MOURIC.

Men's hearts within the city faint with terror,
And the wild cry of fear and prayer ascends
From every hopeless dwelling. And wouldst thou
Here tarry, Gwenyfar, to be a slave
To these detested pagans, to endure
Their brutal scoffs and insults, to be made
The instrument of their lascivious pleasures,
And, led a sacrifice to Cerdic's gods,
Yield thy fair bosom to the murderous knife?

GWENYFAR.

Oh, horrible!—where shall I fly for peace?

MOURIC.

To these extended arms, my queen, my love!
Far to the west, on Fowey's verdant banks,
The ancient castle of Restormal stands,
The regal dwelling of Cornabian chiefs.
Thither I'll bear thee, where nor cymbal clang,
Nor death-wail of the trumpet shall be heard;
Where the wild Saxons' war-shout ne'er hath woke
The slumbering echoes of those mountain woods,
That have for ages flourished round its towers.
I'll cast my useless sword away, nor think
Of aught but love, as we together roam
Along the embowered banks of Fowey's flood;
And thou shalt weave fresh garlands for these brows,
While I will touch old Urien's bardic harp,
That hangs neglected in the trophied hall,
To the wild songs and tales of other years.

GWENYFAR.

I fear no olden tale will be so sad
As ours, if I consent with thee to fly.

MOURIC.

Banish such weakness!—Thou shalt have gay sports,
And merry pastimes, such as still are held,
When comes Midsummer's eve, in every hamlet. (34)
The groves of Fowey oft shall be illumed
With blazing fires, and harp and bagpipe ring (35)
From bower to bower, while youths and maidens dance,
And in the flames their rainbow garlands fling
Of magic herbs and flowers, and wild lays chant
Of ancient bards;—and other, nobler games,
Of manly exercise, and chariot races,
With all the mimic pomp of tourney-feats
By mail-accoutred knights, on gallant steeds,
Shall be performed to please thee. (36)

GWENYFAR.

Ah, my lord,—

MOURIC.

Yet hear me!—Thou shalt to the victors give
The prize of glory, as they kneel before thee
And worship thy sweet beauty. Then, when shines
The sunny morn, we'll to the greenwood shades,
Making them ring with hunter's horn and shout:
There thou with merlin and with snow-white hound,
To rouse the feathered game, shalt gaily roam;
And my strong falcon of the rock shall bring
The swan and crane down from their lofty flight. (37)
O, thou wilt be so happy!—

GWENYFAR.

Ah, sweet prince,
Can joy or peace dwell in that heart from whence
Virtue is banished, to return no more?

MOURIC.

Nay, talk not thus: 'tis virtue to be wise,

And shun those horrors doomed on thee to fall
If thou dost tarry here.

Enter Melva.

MELVA.

My lord ! my lord !
The dreadful Saxon army is in sight !
The distant hills are flashing with its ranks.
Speed from the city, or 'twill be too late !

MOURIC.

Haste, haste, my Gwenyfar, and let us fly,
Ere the affrighted citizens their gates
Fling open to the foe !—Lose not a moment !
Captivity and death await thee here ;
But love and peace are in Cornabia's groves,
Sighing to dress thy blissful bower in roses.

GWENYFAR.

Alas ! I, like the ancient victim, stand
Between two dreadful fires !—If here I stay, (38)
Saxons and death fall on me !—if with thee
I fly, eternal shame must be my doom !
Ah, that imploring look, too lovely prince,
Subdues faint virtue's last remaining power !
Arthur, farewell !—Mouric, for thee will I
Abandon all that woman should hold dear,
More dear than life !—and, be my portion bliss
Or misery, I'll share thine instant flight !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Sorbiodunum, crowded with people, who appear in great terror.*

Enter a Citizen.

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

And hast thou seen the Saxon army, friend ?

CITIZEN.

Alas ! I have, in all its proud array,
And Cerdic, their fierce war-king, at the gates
That front the rising sun, demands admittance.

PLEBEIANS (*crowding round the Citizen, and exclaiming together*)

What are his terms ?—Will he preserve our lives ?
Save us from plunder ?—Will he spare the city ?—
Say what are his demands—speak, tell us quickly !

CITIZEN.

Instant surrender to his victor troops !
Which if complied with, all shall have their lives,
And leave to quit the city, or remain
Subjects to Saxon rule ;—if we refuse,
He swears by all his gods to storm our walls,
Give every soul to the keen falchion's edge,
And make the city one vast heap of ruins !

OLD MAN.

Ah, welladay ! what shall we do, my friends ?

YOUNG MAN.

Bravely resist, long as a stone or dart

Remains to hurl against this pagan foe
Within the city ramparts !

CITIZEN.

'Tis in vain !—

Few are the troops that guard these ill-manned walls,
We cannot long resist ; and if we could,
The horrors on us all must quickly come
Of burning thirst and famine !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Ay, thirst and famine !

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

True, we have no supply of fount or stream.

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

No, nor of food to stand a six days' siege.

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Where is King Arthur ?—He regards us not,
Nor hastens to our rescue—he has left
The city to the mercy of the foe !

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

Who knows not what it means, if once resisted.

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

Here comes the governor, let's hear him speak.

CITIZEN.

O, he would have us fight until the foe,
Maddened with rage, enters to sack the city,
And all our shrieking wives and children yield
Their throats to these barbarians' bloody knives !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Heed not his words—'twere better to be slaves,
Than all to perish by the Saxon sword !

Enter Meridoc and Chiefs.

MERIDOC.

What mean these downcast looks, this idle loitering,

When ye should snatch your weapons and appear,
Like valiant men, upon the city ramparts,
Shouting defiance to the pagan hordes?—
Hence to the walls, ye lily-livered crew!
And colour o'er your cheeks with Saxon blood,
To hide the paleness fear hath painted there!

CITIZEN.

It is in vain to brave it, governor.
We cannot hold the city out six days,
Nor have we men to guard the naked walls.

MERIDOC.

Who told thee so, thou craven-hearted fool?—
Not men to guard the walls!—by the bread of heaven!
But we *have* men, and valiant men, enow
To keep the city forty times six days!
And I *will* keep it too, so long as I
Can keep my dauntless spirit in this body!

CITIZEN.

We will not heed thy boastings, governor.
Where is the king?—Unmindful of his duty,
He leaves the ill-guarded city to its fate.
What men of might or leaders have we here,
Who with this Cerdic and his chiefs dare cope?

MERIDOC.

What though, with all his sword-girt paladins, (39)
Arthur, the far-renowned, be absent still,
Yet have we not the gallant noble Mouric,
A tower of strength, whose deeds of martial fame
Are the proud theme of bards?—Go, call the prince.

[*Exit Officer.*]

And, though I would not boast, I swear to fight,
To save us all, my countrymen and friends,
Us and our children's children from vile bondage

To these detested Saxons, till their swords
Hack limbless this old trunk !

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

The governor
Is a most valiant soldier, and the prince
A well-trying man in arms.

CITIZEN.

Soon will the cry
Of raging thirst and famine through our streets
Be heard by night and day. The summer sun
Hath dried our cisterns up, nor have these rulers,
Relying on the host of Nazonleod, (40)
Wisely provided, by supplies of corn,
The city for a siege.

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

No, we are made
The tools and slaves of those who are our lords ;
And now, to keep their power, they would compel us
To endure the miseries of a lengthened siege.

CITIZEN.

Yes, and then fall—as fall the city must
Ere many days—all victims to the swords
Of these wild conquerors, who, if now admitted,
Would treat us as their friends.

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

'Tis but a change,
At worst, of masters ; and what is't to us,
Who nothing have to lose but our poor lives,
Whether a Briton or a Saxon chief
Rule us with iron bondage ?

MERIDOC.

Can it be,
Ye spiritless and ignominious herd,

That ye would thus give up your noble rights
Of manly freedom, and not strike one blow
For Britain and your homes?—Fear ye to fast,
Yet fear not bondage—galling, endless bondage?—
O, I would drag this famine-wasted form
Along the rampart rounds, till I expired
With thirst and hunger, grasping freedom's sword,
Rather than banquet on the richest viands
In halls of splendour, where grim Tyranny
My vanquished country in his slave-chains held !

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Prince Mouric from the palace, good my chief,
With Gwentyfar the queen, hath fled, and left
The city to its fate !

MERIDOC.

Fled with the queen !—
Christ for thy mercy !—then all hope is lost !
Shame and destruction seize the fugitives !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Now, friends, to parley with the Saxon king.

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

On to the gates—accept his offered terms :
Submit in time, and let the conqueror in.

MERIDOC.

Yet for a moment pause——

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

No—hear him not !
Down with the chiefs ! down with the governor !—
They would destroy us all !

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

Away with him !—

Fling wide the city gates !

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

Ay, meet the Saxons

With songs of welcome !—Let them tread on garlands,
As through our streets the potent conquerors pass !

(Trumpets at a distance.)

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

On, on to meet them—hark ! the trumpet sounds
Their final summons to surrender !

ALL.

On !

Hail them with shouts !—Hail to the noble Saxons !

*Enter Arthur Pendragon, in the disguise of a monk,
with hood, &c.*

ARTHUR.

Hold ! ye deluded Sorbiodunians, hold !—
Fools ! madmen ! cowards ! stand ! or my good sword
Shall cleave the foremost of you, who dare move
One step towards yonder gates !—The fiendish howl
Of death and slaughter rises on the winds ;
And would you, trembling lambs, those wolves of blood
Admit within your rampart-guarded fold ?
The surges of destruction round you roar ;
Yet, like a strong bark on the ocean swell,
If nobly brave and faithful to yourselves,
Ye shall outlive the horrors of the storm,
And lift your banners to the sunny gleams
Of victory and deliverance !—Whence hath come
This coward fear on Britain's war-famed sons,

Shaking them, as in wrath the mighty wind
Bends the weak river reeds, when they should tower
In manly courage, like their giant oaks
Wrestling with the dark tempest !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Who art thou,
That speak'st with such authority to us?—
A monk turned warrior?—Get thee to thy cell !
A rood becomes thee better than a sword !

ARTHUR.

Silence, thou valiant only in disgrace !
Is there no spirit of our ancient blood
Left in your bosoms, that ye thus would yield
Your just inheritance to roving pirates—
Our lovely queen of isles, our paradise,
With her rich valleys blushing to the sun
In all their bloomy dyes ; her mountains, crowned
With stately forests, where the proud stag dwells ;
Her corn-fields rustling to the summer winds,
Like golden seas ere setting suns depart ;
And her fair cities, with their castled hills,
Towering in Roman strength and Roman grandeur,
All nations look on with desiring eyes ;—
And would ye yield one rood of this bright land,
Without bedewing it with your best blood ?

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

He talks it well—hear, hear the warrior monk.

ARTHUR.

Shall ye, the Cymry, whose forefathers came
Far o'er the ocean to this blessed isle,
And reigned primeval lords of all its woods, (41)
Yield up what they bequeathed in sacred trust
To you and to your children?—What ! shall Britons

Their envied birthright lose?—shall they be swept
From off their native soil, and only leave
A name behind, to all succeeding years
Disgraced with cowardice?—View yonder plains,
Look on your warlike father's ancient tombs!—
There lie the ashes of the mighty dead,
Who nobly for their country fought and fell
Beneath the Roman sword, preferring death
To bonds and slavery.—Their fame-honoured deeds
Fling o'er the stream of time eternal glory,
Like sunbeams on the glittering river's course,
Turning to golden radiance all its waves.

CITIZEN.

Listen no longer to his artful tongue :
The king hath left us, given us up a prey,
Our wives and children, to the Saxon sword,—
And we must yield, or perish !

ARTHUR.

Lying slave !

Left you ! No ; never, never will the king
His people leave, if they forsake not him ;
But for their rights, in freedom's noble cause,
Fight with them, for them, to life's latest gasp !—
Here stands the king ! Ye feeble-minded men,

(Throwing off his disguise.)

Behold his dragon-helm ! Behold the badge
Of our religion on his robes emblazed ! (42)
Behold his caliburno, blade of fire,
Blest by the midnight vision of St. Joseph,
At his high shrine in Avalonia's isle ! (43)
Along its edge gleams victory's radiant glory ;
The glory of a hundred battles fought
For Britain and for freedom !—Soon shall flash

Its vengeance-lightnings round yon pagan crests,
And blast their boastful might !

*(The Citizen shrinks back abashed ; and the Plebeians
shout—)*

The king ! The king !

ARTHUR.

Ay, let your shoutings mingle with the clouds,
And to the trumpet-clangours of yon host
Right bravely speak defiance !

MERIDOC.

O, my lord,
A gush of pleasure through my bosom thrills,
Felt, but not to be told, at thy appearance !
Greatly I joy that thou, in happy hour,
Art from the north returned to save this city,
Rushing on sure destruction in its fear,
Like the wild stag that dashes o'er the cliffs,
And meets his fate, when on the forest winds
Comes the stanch blood-hounds' far-resounding yell.

ARTHUR.

Yes, and returned with wide-augmented fame !
I have subdued the tyrant of the north,
Huel, my bitterest foe. This blessed sword
Was dimmed with his false blood ! and I have won
In Caledonia's forest victor-wreaths
O'er gathered hosts of many nations, who
Crossed the blue hazy ocean to this isle,
Spreading dismay and death on every side. (44)
And now, with glory circled, will I soon
This Cerdic meet again, on yonder plains ;
With whom I 've for the battle mastery striven
So oft in fields of carnage.

MERIDOC.

Fields of fame !—

Victorious prince, the pillar of our tribes,
Their guardian leader, on whose head doth rest
The glory of thine ancient warlike race !
Thou, through the storms and darkness of the times,
Onward to freedom shalt thy people guide,
And burst the pagan chains !—O, thy proud name
Will through all after-years on Britain shed
A bright renown, as o'er the northern arch
Unfading shines the constant polar star ;
To which shall future bards with rapture point,
And conquerors turn their eyes, with ardour fired
To emulate thy greatness, as they steer,
Shouting for freedom, through the battle-surge.

ARTHUR.

Yes, I was born, my friends, to be your champion,—
The champion of the holy Christian faith ;
And never shall this sacred blade be sheathed,
Till I have freed my country from these hordes,
Or this, my badge of championship, be made
My winding-sheet of honour, steeped in blood,
On the red fields of slaughter !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Noble Arthur !

SECOND PLEBEIAN.

We'll follow thee to death ! We'll fight for freedom !

THIRD PLEBEIAN.

No yielding to the foe ! We'll scorn their fury !

FIRST PLEBEIAN.

Scoff at their threats !—

ARTHUR.

Ay, as the sun-born eagle

Glances at the red lightning, and upsoars,
Amid the storm-piled clouds on high, to meet
The thunder-spirit in his wild career,
Disdaining all his wrath,—so fearlessly
We'll greet the Saxon onset!—I, my friends,
A gallant host have in full march advancing
Against this robber-king:—to-morrow ye
Shall see its banners floating on your plains,
And hear its shouts, the battle heralding,
Around your lofty towers!

MERIDOC.

May Heaven to thee
The victory yield!—It will, I know it will!—
O, how I long to follow in thy train,
And imitate thy deeds!

ARTHUR.

I, by my spies,
Learning that Cerdic was advancing hither,
And that your hearts, because of him, were faint,
Hastened to give you certainty of succour.—
Let watchmen be on every turret placed,
And a strong guard along the rampart walls.
This night we in our palace hall will meet
At solemn feast our warrior-knights of fame.
Hang out your blazing lights in every street;
Let all your towers like noble beacons shine,
And joy and mirth resound from every dwelling!
Let him who doth refuse to-morrow's dawn
To draw a sword beneath St. Mary's banner,
For liberty and Britain's noble cause,
Be scorned by men, and die accursed by heaven!

[*Shouts. Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A Hall in the Palace.*

Enter King Arthur attended, and Meridoc.

ARTHUR.

Well know I, Meridoc, thy honest heart ;—
That thou wouldst rather perish 'neath the ruins
Of these fair towers, than yield them to the foe.
But where hath princely Mouric hid his face,
That foremost of you all he stood not forth,
With naked clymore, to oppose the rabble ?

MERIDOC.

Alas, my lord,——

ARTHUR.

Why dost thou look dismayed
And trouble-struck, good chief, nor give response ?
Again, I ask, where is the truant prince ?—
And where, ye who attend my kingly state,
Stays our fair queen, that she is not the first
To hail her lord's return to these glad towers,
Crowned with triumphal wreaths, to welcome him
To the long-absent joys of his loved home ?—
O, how I long to fold her in these arms,
And pour a flood of rapture o'er her heart
(That shares in all the glory of my fame),—
Like spring's young sun, when he, in golden pomp,
With burning kiss salutes the joyous earth,
Encircling her with his own living splendours !——
What means this silence ?—Answer, I command !

MERIDOC.

Deeply I grieve to say prince Mouric fled
Ere your arrival, and regardless left
The city to my care.

ARTHUR.

What! fled! and left

Those two most valued treasures, which I hold
Dearest on earth,—my beauteous, gentle queen,
And my beloved city,—to become
A prey to these rapacious sons of blood?
When I commanded he should strictly watch,
And guard them from all danger?—Dastard slave!
Unworthy of the line from which he sprang!
The misbegotten mongrel!—Some base herdgroom
Defiled his mother's marriage-bed, and she
Gave life to one, who on her name hath cast
A foul, eternal blot!—Where is my queen?—

MERIDOC.

How shall I utter it?—

ARTHUR.

Ah, she is ill

With terror, trembling like the gentle fawn
When the blood-quaffing wolves around her howl.
O, let me fly to soothe and calm her fears!

MERIDOC.

I know not how to tell the fatal truth,—
Yet told it must be. Patience be thy balm!—
The queen is also, with her paramour,
The guilty Mouric, fled!—

ARTHUR.

Fled! and with Mouric?

My dear-loved kinsman, and my bosom friend!—
My Gwennyfar!—O, holy virgin-mother,
Shield me from madness for my country's sake!
Yet madness were a refuge from the pangs,
The agonies of soul I now endure!—

A cloudy dizziness comes o'er my brain !
My senses reel beneath this fearful shock !

MERIDOC.

Glory of Britain, summon to thy aid
The grace of patience ! Not the hero shines
With nobler lustre in the fields of conquest,
Than in th' endurance of his private sufferings
With manly fortitude.

ARTHUR.

All virtue fails

To allay the tempest here, and fortitude
Struggles in vain to stop this tide of grief !
I have been wandering in a blessed dream
Of love and bliss, high on a hill of flowers ;—
A fearful storm at last hath wakened me,
And shot its crimson flame-bolts through my heart,
Hurling me o'er the mountain precipice,
Down, down to gulfs of horror !—Traitor ! fiend !
Foul, lecherous hell-dog !—O, wert thou but here,
Crouching beneath my vengeance, I would dash
Thy limbs upon the pavement, trample out
Thy crime-polluted soul, and dip my feet
In thy hot villain-blood !——

MERIDOC.

Gracious my lord, let me now counsel peace
To thy wild griefs !—Invoke the Virgin's aid,
Whose banner in the battle gives thee victory ;
Let her benign and holy influence shed
A calm on the fierce passions of thy soul,
Like the soft fairy moonlight on the sea,
When from its surge hath passed the storm away.

ARTHUR.

What, Meridoc, doth not that wretch deserve,

Who, under the false mask of smiling friendship,
Wins the confiding heart, till it believes
His is a god all purity and truth,
Trusting its dearest treasure to his care,
The sacred treasure of a spotless wife ;
Who, when the lovely prize is in his power,
The accursed robber, bears it off, and laughs
That heart, which loved him as itself, to scorn,
Mocking its agony !—O, he deserves
The deepest gulf in hell !

MERIDOC.

Yet, yet be calm.

ARTHUR.

Who can with calmness bear a wrong like this ?
I cannot rest, till I behold my sword
Red with his treacherous life-stream to the hilt !

MERIDOC.

Yet Gwennyfar——

ARTHUR.

Name not the adulterous pest !
Dishonour-blasted wretch ! O, I could rend
Her limb from limb, and joy to shake her blood
From my encrimsoned garments, as the eagle
Ruffles her pinions when she upward soars,
Gorged with her victim-banquet !

MERIDOC.

Ah, my lord,
Pardon my boldness ; but such dreadful thoughts
Of fell revenge befit not one who wears
That holy badge of meekness on his robes ;
His image, who all woes and injuries bore
With unrepining bravery.

ARTHUR.

Shall I not
Revenge an injury so deep, so galling,
That it o'erwhelms all patience, as the waves
In gathered mountains o'er the dark rock dash,
That would impede their fury?—No, I am not
That coward wittol, who would tamely bear
The shame a villain heaps upon my honour,
While the base world, that laughs at me, applauds
Him for a deed which should consign his name
To infamy eternal!

MERIDOC.

Good my lord,
I would not have thee slumber o'er thy wrongs;
A prince whose deeds resound through many lands;
No, I would have thee bear them like a hero
Worthy thy high renown.—Let not despair
O'ercome the great deliverer of his country—
She claims thy thoughts, thy energies, thy powers,
Before all private wrong. Soon will this shame
Pass from thy brightness as the moon's dim shade
Glides from the kingly sun's refulgent orb,
And thou again shine forth in all thy glory,
Untarnished with a spot.

ARTHUR.

Ah, Meridoc,
Can I my gentle Gwennyfar forget?
Forget her love, her innocence, and beauty?—
Hers seemed a spirit for communion made
With those bright shapes that float on golden clouds,
And visit holy saints, while her fair form
Was moulded such a soul to imparate;
And when she smiled, 'twas heaven!—But she is fallen!—

The tempter hath betrayed her !—fallen for ever !
Like the proud seraph from his sun-bright throne,
To deadly shamelessness !

MERIDOC.

O, think no more
On her perfections, or the base seducer ;
But calm the headstrong current of thy wrath.

ARTHUR.

Go, bid the sea be calm, and cease to pour
His dragon-howl of terror on the night,
When felon whirlwinds o'er his solitudes
Dark in their madness dash :—
Go, bind the savage bison of the woods,
And the fierce elk, that freeborn mountain-king,
In flowery wreaths, and yoke them to thy car,
Or mount the thunder-tempest in its might,
And send the lightnings on thine errands forth,
And make them do thee service ! but think not
To calm the moody wrath of wild despair,
That, like a tigress of her whelps bereaved,
Yells for revenge and blood !

[*Exit.*

MERIDOC.

Great are this godlike chief's heroic virtues ;
And, when unmoved by passion, he is mild
And kind as morning sunshine, in a flood
Of glory flung o'er the green vale and hill,
The joyous flowers awakening in their beauty ;
But, when by anger stirred, his rage is like
The storm-swelled cataract's far-sounding crash,
Whose waters in their desolating course
Spread ruin and dismay ! His wrongs may well
Excuse this burst of fury. There is yet
Another cause for sorrow.—Hapless princess !

Poor Imogenia! thy captivity
Will make his cup of bitterness o'erflow! [Exit.

SCENE III.—*A Hall in the Palace of Cerdic at Winchester, hung with tapestry of gold.* (45)

Enter Imogenia, followed by Slaves, who, as she turns round to them, kneel to receive her commands.

IMOGENIA.

Retire—I need no service, and would be alone.

[*Exeunt Slaves, bending very low.*

Still am I held a captive in these halls,
Where pagan rites and superstition reign
In all their gloomy terrors!—When will come
The hour of my deliverance?—Ah, false heart,
Thou hast betrayed me! 'Tis not for deliverance
These heavy sighs are breathed! Love, fatal love,
Fills my whole soul with its destructive flames,
Consuming every holier thought and purpose!
I, of the ancient blood of British kings,
A barbarous Saxon love!
Whose sword spreads death and terror through all ranks,
And desolates the land which gave me birth!
O monstrous madness!—Yet in vain I strive
To win the victory o'er this lawless passion!

Enter Helga.

HELGA—(*kneeling*).

Permit me, gentle princess, to attend,
With sacred homage, on your regal state.
Captivity, I see, sits heavy on you;
Would I could soothe your sorrows.

IMOGENIA.

Helga, rise.

'Thou canst not, meek-eyed pagan, ease the grief
Or calm the tempest of my troubled soul.
But why is this, that wheresoe'er I move,
Splendour, observance, and deep homage wait,
As on some being of unearthly power ?
I'm weary of this idle pomp and worship ;
It suits not with a captive's humble state.

HELGA.

Ah, little does the hapless princess dream
Such honours still are paid to those our chiefs
Devote a sacrifice on Odin's altar.
Would I could save her !—(*Aside.*)

IMOGENIA.

Helga, thou alone

My love dost claim of all who on me wait.—
There is a rooted sorrow in thy heart
Which oftentimes on that cheek in tears is seen,
Like showers on early roses ; yet art thou
No captive among strangers ; thou art free
To wander and enjoy the pleasant scenes
Of hill and valley, when the skylark floats,
Like a dim speck, amid the golden sea,
And purple cloud-waves of the gorgeous east,
While downward in a stream of music comes
His joyous morn-hymn, like an angel's song.

HELGA.

Ah, lovely lady——

IMOGENIA.

And when day declines,
When earth is paradise, and heaven all glory,
Far from the city's crowded haunts of care,

Still art thou free with the young fawn to trip
Along the forest glades, and pluck the flowers
That weep, like parted lovers, for the sun,
And listen to the farewell-carolled songs
Of gay birds, making all the woods rejoice ;
While I sit here, like a lone, widowed dove,
A prisoner, pining for my home and friends.

HELGA.

I am a stranger, too, in this strange land :
Like thee, I feel a home-spell on my heart,
That binds me to those scenes which gave me birth.
Far from the fairy shades was I brought up
Of this bright land of flowers. On the dark shores
Of Scandia's sea, amid the stormy north,
Stood my loved father's halls, a lordly dwelling.
There, with the elk, I on the mountain-steeps,
The happy child of Nature, wildly roamed.
My music was the roar of tempests rushing
With lion fury on the struggling woods,
When spirits shrieked, amid the deep defiles,
Bright with their lightning wings ! I loved to hear
The proud sea dash his billows on the shore,
The torrent's yell, and the far-sounding voice
Of mountain avalanch, from rock to rock
Rolling in thunder to the lonely vale,
While solitude called unto solitude,
Like shouting armies in the battle-day.

IMOGENIA.

And canst thou sigh for desertness like this ?

HELGA.

Deeply I sigh for those wild scenes of grandeur.
O, 'twas my joy, when winter's wizard power
Smote into silence northern lake and sea,

And the broad surges stood like mountain cliffs,
To whirl my reindeer-car o'er glassy plains,
And dash through drifted piles of feathery snow.

IMOGENIA.

Why didst thou leave thy native land, to roam
With these wild sons of war ?

HELGA.

Ah, gentle princess,
There is a spell that comes upon the heart,
More mighty than the enchantment e'en of home ;
And, if I err not, you too feel its power.
'Tis love—whose magic influence led me here,
A pilgrim stranger to these distant shores.

IMOGENIA.

O, thou hast touched a chord, to which this heart
Vibrates in unison—but ah, what pain,
What thrilling terror doth its music strike
Through all my trembling frame !—Yet, tell me who
Has won thee from thy home and all its joys ?

HELGA.

'Tis Porta, that brave chief, whose arms have gained
A wide renown on Scandia's stormy shores,
And he, fresh wreaths in distant lands to win,
Hath followed Cerdic to these island wars,
Leaving me friendless here in stranger halls,
To wait with weariness till he shall come
From the red havoc of the carnage field.
But ah ! perhaps amid the trampled dead
My gallant warrior lies !

IMOGENIA.

How blest thy love,
Compared with my ill-destined, hopeless passion !

HELGA.

Kenrick, the illustrious battle-prince——

IMOGENIA.

Breathe not
To me his name!—I would not, dare not hear it!
Rapture and death are mingled in the sound!—
Heart-sorrowing hour in which I first beheld
His noble form!—Would, Helga, I had died
Ere I was borne a captive from the walls
Of Ambri's holy abbey!

HELGA.

Would you wed
The godlike prince, whose homage to your beauty
Is like the worship mortals pay to spirits
Whose radiant charms their midnight visions bless,
Your union might give peace to Britain's land.
If you refuse, I dare not name the horrors
That will ere long befall you.

IMOGENIA.

Wed him! no—
Impossible!—He is a pagan chief!
And though, with tears of anguish and regret,
My love for him I own is measureless,
Yet never, never must I be his bride!—
Can nuptial wreaths in love's soft union bind
Christian and pagan?—O, as well might winter,
Clad in eternal snows, bright summer woo,
In all her purple wealth of blooming flowers,
To yield her beauties to his cold embrace,
And bind her roses round his stormy brows;
As well might the tempestuous midnight hope
To win the life-awakening smile of morn,

And blend his shadows with her ruby light !—

It cannot be—— (Flourish of martial music.)

HELGA.

Those trumpet measures speak

Kenrick's arrival at the palace gates.

I pray the gods, he, for thy sake, may win

Thee to his love, and thus avert that doom

Which else must soon be thine.

[Exit.

IMOGENIA.

O, that I now

Could, like the eagle, to some desert fly,

Where none might ever find me !—No—'tis false !

My lips belie my heart—I fain would stay,

To catch the love-spell of his eye, that beams

So darkly beautiful, like some bright star

O' th' flower that owns its influence. Fatal passion !

Thou dost beguile me to my soul's undoing !

Why stand I rooted here ?—O, I am like

The midnight helmsman, who enchanted hears

The song of ocean-spirit, from her shell

Breathing the soul of music o'er the seas ;

Her moonlit magic calls the tempest forth

His bark to sink amid the howling deep,

Yet he delighted listens, till her voice

Dies on the rising winds.

Enter Kenrick.

KENRICK.

My Imogenia !—

All-beauteous maid, thy splendour-darting eye

Is the bright star of happiness to me,

Guiding my course, through tempest-surge and gloom,

To love's enchanting haven !—I have flown
From battle-fields and noisy camps to spend
A few brief hours with thee, whose blissful smile
Comes o'er the turmoil of a warrior's life,
Like sun-gleams through the tempest, and thy voice
Soothes my fond soul with music-breathing tones,
After the yell and din of battle-strife,
Like the love-passioned nightingale's wild lay
When evening storms are past.

IMOGENIA.

Alas, my lord,
Why hast thou left, for me, the tented field,
The post of honour, and the warrior's glory,
The clarion's blast, that tells of victories won,
And shout of bannered ranks, their leader hailing
The lord of conquered cities ?—'Tis not meet
That I, thy captive slave, should see thee more,
Or hear thee talk of love.

KENRICK.

Not see me more !
Nor listen to the pleadings of affection—
Young, ardent, fond affection ?—Imogenia,
What means this cold disdain ? Am I become
Unworthy of thy love ? Am I not born
Of kingly lineage, valiant, and well skilled
In all the martial feats of manly strength ?—
Not e'en the Berserkir, in battle-hour, (46)
When frenzy rushes on him till he roars
Like the lance-maddened lion, dares to strive
With me for victory. Who like me can hurl
His sword and spear into the air, and catch
Their sharp points harmlessly ?—or who will bend
My steel-bright bow, and to the mark dispatch

Like me the death-winged arrow?—I can mount
The craggy precipice, and plant my shield
On the proud eagle's eyrie. I am skilled
In Runic characters, and ofttimes win,
From envious Scald, the honours of the harp,
Blending the poet's with the warrior's wreath—
And wilt thou scorn me, love? (47)

IMOGENIA.

Ah, can the dove
With the cloud-cleaving eagle dare to mate,
Leave the green forest for the storm-crowned peak,
And gaze upon the sun?—I scorn thee not,
Redoubted chief; my eyes, my lips have told
That all my heart is thine. But O, my lord,
There is a dreadful gulf betwixt our loves
Which neither e'er can pass!

KENRICK.

By Friga's brightness,
Nothing shall our affianced hearts divide,
If thou——

IMOGENIA.

Hear me, my prince—I am a Christian maid,
And of a royal line of Christian kings,
To whom this isle has long obedience paid;
Religion doth forbid that I should wed
With one of pagan creed.

KENRICK.

O, I am come
To supplicate thee on my bended knees,
To yield thy faith and worship at our altars.
Then will a throne be thine, our loves be blest,
And thou thy country's deep and bleeding wounds
Heal with the balm of peace!

IMOGENIA.

Renounce my faith!

And worship your false gods of rock and stone,
Whose altars are defiled with human blood?—
Renounce my faith in Him who made the world,
And hung yon sun amid the golden skies?
Shall I, for earthly thrones of transient pomp,
Give up a throne eternal in the heavens?
To save my bleeding country I would yield
Freely this form to the devouring flames,
But not the immortal principle within
To everlasting fires.

KENRICK.

Nay, sweet my love,

Believe thou still in Him, the awful Sire
Of men and gods, whose power we also own— (48)
Ancient of Days, the essence of all things
That have been, are, and shall be!—Still to him
Mayst thou pay sacred homage—then consent
This night to kneel in yonder temple aisles,
At the high shrine of Odin, there renounce
Thy Christian creed, and from the golden censer
Cast incense in the altar-flames that burn
Before his sacred image.

IMOGENIA.

O, forbear,

Nor urge me to a deed so dread, so damning!—
My blood turns cold with horror at the thought!

KENRICK.

O, but for *my* sake, Imogenia, yield!
If thou hast in thy tender, gentle heart
One spark of young affection, one kind thought
For him who with unbounded passion loves,

And who would die for thee, O sink me not
Down the dark gulf of madness and despair !

IMOGENIA.

Kenrick, were I to yield, soon wouldst thou see
Thy hapless Imogenia plunged in madness !
And then to die a frantic, base apostate,
And be for ever lost !—O, save me, save me,
Ye saints and martyrs of the blessed cross,
From such soul-blighting guilt !

KENRICK.

Ah, Imogenia,
My stern and unrelenting sire hath sworn—
O, how shall I reveal the dreadful tale—
At his return to lead thee to the temple,
When that fair form must on the altar lie,
A blackened corse amid devouring flames !—
Nothing can save thee from that awful doom,
But the renouncement of thy Christian faith !

IMOGENIA.

O, let me die rather than live accursed,
To battle feebly with a fierce despair,
And feel the blood-gorged vulture of remorse
Still preying on my heart—to wear the brand
Of foul apostacy upon my brow,
Become a loathsome mark of public scorn,
And leave to all posterity a name
Blackened with odious guilt !—No, Kenrick, no !
Better to die, and be at peace with heaven !
Then will the crown of martyrdom be mine !
And when the last faint groan of life shall cease,
My spirit, mid a seraph band, shall mount,
With palm and harp of gold, to yonder skies,
And win a sunbright throne !

KENRICK.

Sweet Imogenia,
Yet, yet have pity,—if not to thyself,
To me some mercy show.—Thus do I kneel,—
I, the proud Saxon prince, son of a god !
Kneel to implore thou wilt thy faith forswear ;
For I it is who must, as Odin's priest,
Strike to thy heart the blow ! My hand must take
The life of her whom more than life I prize !
I must behold her fall beneath my blade,
And her death-struggles view, as, bathed in blood,
She yields her gentle spirit to the gods !

IMOGENIA.

O, far more welcome, then, will be to me
Death, which shall put a period to my woes,
Since thou must give the blow.—And dost thou hope
I can be won to thy terrific creed ?
Could I by love but draw thee to become
A heart-devoted Christian——Grant, ye saints,
That when the dreadful trial-hour arrives,
My firmness, as I die baptized in blood,
May win thee to the true and only faith
Revealed to erring mortals ; then my death
Will be triumphant glory.—

KENRICK.

By my sword
And eagle shield, in awful mood, I swear
I will not see thy death ; for when this arm
Should strike thee at the altar, I will plunge
The knife in my own heart.

IMOGENIA.

O, Kenrick, Kenrick !

'Tis now thou plant'st a dagger in my bosom !
To see thee perish, fall by thine own hand !—
No ! rather let me die a thousand deaths !
O, that these eyes had ne'er beheld thy form,
Thou kingly one, adorned with every grace
To captivate the soul of yielding woman.—
I am undone !—I see, I see my fate !—
The tempest of despair around me darkens !
The vengeance-fires of heaven flash through the
gloom !
For mercy, mercy, Kenrick, I implore !—

KENRICK.

Thou sweet enthusiast, let me to this heart
Fold thee, my soul's bright treasure, and kiss off
Those tears, that hang like dew on morning flowers.

IMOGENIA.

Why do I listen to thy flattering voice,
Whose tones are like the sound of distant music
On desert sands to an expiring pilgrim ?
Why do I gaze upon that spell-like eye,
Dark as the darkest blue of heaven, when shines
Through its rich depths the star-beams ?—I will look
No longer on its brightness; 'tis a light
Through the wild tempest flashing o'er the rock,
The rock of death, where all my hopes are wrecked !
O, art thou not the minister of blood ?
Why do I love thee to my soul's destruction ?

KENRICK.

Banish these timid fancies. Come, sweet maid,
The priests are gathered in the solemn temple,
And wait, with awful mysteries, to receive
Their lovely convert. Then shall bridal rites,

My princess, make us one, and all the Saxons
Will hail thee as a goddess through the land.

IMOGENIA.

A fiend ! a fiend ! to be abhorred for ever !

KENRICK.

Wilt thou behold me weltering in my blood,
Self-slaughtered at thy feet ?

IMOGENIA.

O, not for worlds !

'Tis I, 'tis I will die—since thy stern sire
Demands my life to please his horrid gods !

KENRICK.

Still must I, Imogenia, plead in vain ?—
Then let me perish here !—I will not live
To see the sternness of my father's wrath,
When he shall from the fields of battle come,
In all his pomp of victory, to these towers.—
Unyielding maid, 'tis Kenrick who must die.
Thus—doomed by thee—thus, at thy feet, I fall,
The bleeding victim !—

(Lifts his dagger to stab himself.)

IMOGENIA.

Hold, sweet Kenrick, hold !

(Catching his arm.)

Lead me where'er thou wilt.—On every side
'Tis darkness, horror, anguish, and despair !
O, my bewildered brain !—I hear the sound
Of mighty tempests, and the thunder-clang
As of a host to battle marching forth !—
It is the rushing sound of demon wings !
Hell from her confines is unloosed, and comes

With her red-whirling flames, and shrieks, and curses,
To hurl the apostate down her roaring gulfs !
Ferocious forms, with wild, terrific yells,
Shout forth their fiendish triumph !—O, I sink,
Blazing, amid a hurricane of lightnings !
Ha, ha, ha, ha ! (*Falls into the arms of Kenrick.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Grand Roman Hall in the Palace of Sorbiodunum. The ROUND TABLE in the centre. A magnificent Banquet. Arthur seated under a Canopy. Meridoc, Clydoc, Roderic, and all the Knights, discovered feasting. Bards at a distance, playing on their Harps.*

ARTHUR.

My gallant paladins, knights of the cross, (50)
Your order is the first of Christian faith,
And ye are sworn the champions of its cause,
The brave defenders of your native land,
Against all heathenesse !—Fill to its brim
The rosy wine-cup ; lift the goblet high,
And let the hydromel's rich amber-stream
Rise sparkling to your lips. This is a night
When the brave bearers of the shield and spear
Should, after the fatigues of war, repose,
And feast in kingly hall to joyous strains
Of harp and martial legend.—Through yon gates
Will we rush forth, at early dawn, and chase
These wolves of slaughter from their camp, and then
For Venta's towers, where, in captivity,
My dear-loved sister Imogenia pines.

CLYDOC—(to Roderic).

Dost thou not mark that dim and heavy cloud,
Which, spite his vain attempts to wear the smile

Of careless mirth, hangs on the darkened brows
Of our brave Dragon-king ?

RODERIC.

Well may deep gloom
Obscure the wonted sunshine of his joy
At the triumphal feast.—Hadst thou a wife
Who pressed, in wantonness, her ruby lip
Upon another's cheek, and with him fled
Home and thy doating arms, I ween that thou
Wouldst something bear upon thy laden brows
More weighty than a cloud.

CLYDOC.

From which my sword
Should quickly free them.—Dost thou think I'd wear,
Like the slow elk, my monstrous horns aloft,
To be entangled in the forest boughs,
Till the fierce dogs of scandal fastened on me ?
No !—Had I such a wife, I soon would cast
The frail one off, like a base weed, to rot,
And on my clymore should her lover's blood
Stand till its fever cooled.

Enter Ivor.

IVOR.

Lord of the battle, theme of fame-tuned harps,
The vanguard of our swift-approaching host
The queen and Mouric in their flight have ta'en.

ARTHUR.

Where is the traitor and that wretched woman ?

IVOR.

Now at the western gate.

ARTHUR.

Go, Ivor, haste

And bring them to our presence ; here will we,
Before our chiefs and warriors, sentence pass
On those vile criminals.

IVOR.

My lord, the queen
Refuses to be brought

ARTHUR.

What ! lingers yet
One tint of shame encrimsoned on her cheek ?
And is she guilt-confounded ?—Let her then
Stand here, amid my warrior-knights, the scoff,
The mockery, and abhorrence of the brave.
Hence, heed her not, but to the banquet-hall
Drag the base wanton and her paramour. [*Exit Ivor.*
O, I am in a storm of passions whelmed !
The battle in its hottest rage is sport
To the fierce tempest here !—I, who adored
This woman, once all beautiful and pure,
Must now for ever cast her from my bosom,
A false, toad-spotted wanton !—O, how hard !—
But I *will* act the stern, impartial judge,
Despite a lover's weakness lingering here,
Like the faint golden gleam ere darkness wins
O'er dying day the triumph of the skies.

Enter Mouric, Gwenyfar, veiled, Ivor, and Guards.

GWENYFAR.

Ah, fatal love ! canst thou support me now
To bear contempt, the stings of venom'd tongues,
And joy malignant of the herd who exult
O'er greatness in disgrace ?—O, virtue, honoured,
And honouring all o'er whom thou shedd'st thy brightness,
How do I feel thy loss !—(*Aside.*)

ARTHUR.

Hail, Mouric ! prince illustrious, paragon
Of faithful friends, bright valour's darling child,
Who bravely to the enemy showed his back,
Leaving to lustful violence and blood
This city, which on him relied for safety ;
Who, made the guardian of a friend's best treasure,
Magnanimously robbed that friend, and fled,
Like a true knight, from battle-scenes of fame
To the lascivious bowers of wantonness !
Welcome to warrior-festival and song,
A meet companion for the sons of honour !

MOURIC.

Thy mockery I repay with equal scorn.
What I have done, I've done.—If that it be
A crime to feel love's wild, delirious bliss,
I have a powerful plea——Behold, ye chiefs,
This, this is my excuse——

(Lifting the veil from the face of Gwenyfar.)

If there be one

Among you who can on such beauty gaze,
And not forgive my passion—save yon king—
Let his proud gifts, his honours, and his fame
Be what they may, I pity their possessor,
And deem him less than man.—My doom I read,
Arthur, in thy stern eye.—Lead me to death,
And thou shalt find my last act will belie
The aspersions thou hast uttered.

ARTHUR.

Crafty fiend !

Such angel loveliness should on thy heart
A holy spell have cast, all loose desires
Quenching in reverence. O, her peerless form

Seemed to enshrine whate'er of heaven's own brightness
To mortals is revealed.
Thou, demon of the storm, hast darkly rushed
O'er beauty's paradise, transforming it
To a most loathsome desert, now the abode
Of guilt's foul, snaky monsters!—Plagues feed on thee!
Hence with the miscreant to the dungeon's gloom;
When we have won the battle, he shall die!

(Mouric is led off by the Guards.)

GWENYFAR.

Now comes my sentence——Let me plead, my lord,
Not for myself——

ARTHUR.

For whom, then, wouldst thou kneel?
Thy paramour?—That doubles thy foul crime,
And conquer's pity struggling in my heart
To save thee from thy fate!—How shall I calm
The whirlwind raging here!—O, Gwenyfar,
My love for thee was boundless as the heavens!
Thy smile was brighter to my soul than fame,
And thy applause more dear than shout of hosts
On victory's blood-red fields!—My wrongs unman me!—
These scalding tears burst forth, in spite of rage,
And tell how much I loved thee!—Pardon, chiefs,
The weakness of the warrior—these are drops
Wrung from my inmost heart by agony!—
I must be quick, ere madness on me rush!
Justice calls out, and vengeance, though she rend
The cords of life asunder, shall pronounce,
Thou, guilty one, thy doom!—Guards! lead her hence,
Into the camp of yonder Saxon host,
And leave her to their mercy!

GWENYFAR—(*shrieking*).

Ha! ruthless king!

Stab, hack me piecemeal with thy blood-stained sword;
But do not send me forth amid yon camp
Of barbarous, lawless Saxons!—Death I crave!
O, give me death,—but let me die before thee!

ARTHUR.

I will not listen!—From yon eastern gate,
Go, thrust her forth!

GWENYFAR.

O, horrid, horrid fate!

[*Exit, led by Guards.*]

ARTHUR.

She's gone for ever!—Farewell to the light
That shone on life's dark path!—O, when I lay
Amid the storm-shook tent, at midnight hour,
Her image soothed my troubled mind to rest,
And in the battle turmoil still I thought
On my loved Gwenyfar!—But she is gone!
Torn from this heart for ever!—O, 'tis like
The final parting of the soul and body!—
A death-like gloom on my wild spirit comes!
Am I awake?—

MERIDOC.

Nay, good my royal lord,—

ARTHUR.

Outpour the ruby-gushing wine, to quench
My fiery thirst!—Deep let me drink, and drown
The flames that scorch me here!—
Another goblet!—fill it to the brim!—
There's poison in the cup! (*Dashing it away.*)
Revenge hath drugged
The potion with the venom of his snakes!

It flows, like molten lead, through all my veins !——
My Gwenyfar, come pass thy soft, cool palm
Across these burning brows !——Ha ! she is gone !
Driven forth to be the mock of savage hordes,
A slave to the fierce lust of every robber
That prowls at midnight through yon heathen camp !
All curses on her base seducer light
At his last hour !——O, torture ! madness ! death !
(*Falls, and the Knights group round him.*)

SCENE II.—*A dim Grove near the Saxon Camp.*

Enter several Adelfrune or Prophetesses, in white tunics and vests, girt with belts of brass, to which are suspended naked swords. (51)

FIRST ADELFRUNA.

The young moon on the evening's raven locks
Her pearly crescent hangs, the signal-light
Our battle-god, amid his cloudy halls,
Gives for to-morrow's strife. At early dawn (52)
The crooked seaxen shall be red with blood ;
The barbed arrow to its death-mark speed ;
The battle-charger's neigh and tramp be heard,
The chariot's thunder-wheels, the shout and yell
Of steel-clad men, struggling and falling, where
The broken ranks meet like contending seas !
Proud city, thou shalt fall ! round yonder towers
The dread Valkyriur, on their snow-white steeds,
Shall, rushing, lift the voice of war, and fling
From their bright shields the lightning of destruction !

Enter other Adelfrunæ.

Say, sisters of the magic Runes, what ye
Have on the night-air heard?—The elements
Speak out the gods' decrees ; and rocks, and streams,
And woods, and hills, are all prophetic spirits,
That syllable the future in our ears,
Who are the enthëal ministers of heaven. (53)

SECOND ADELRUNA.

I come from where the mountain cataract flings,
In giant might, o'er rock and jutting crag,
Its hundred streams ; through dewy mist and spray
Gushing like molten silver. Hoarsely deep
Was its eternal roar and hissing crash ;
Loud as the awful voice of Thor, when he,
Clad in the tempest, lifts his thunder-shout,
Making the world's foundations shake, and all
Its dwellers pale with fear !—I stood, and heard
Still far and wild the solemn music roll,
With song o' the flood's immortal genii blent ;
And as it rolled, from glen and cavern rang
Th' unearthly cry of ' Battle ! battle ! battle !'

THIRD ADELRUNA.

I from Dunmorna's ocean summits come,
Where by the ancient tombs of warrior-kings
I stood with solitude. The night-gales rushed,
From their dark home of storms, abroad in wrath,
And on the hill-top dashed the thunder-clouds.
Then burst, with shattered flames, dread peal on peal !—
Th' affrighted sea-bird screamed, as by her cliffs
Passed the redoubled roar ! Then rose the deep,
Outstretched to the black verge of heaven, and howled

To all the gathering winds with maniac rage,
Like writhing monster in the pangs of death ;
While o'er his gloomy surges onward shot
The lightning's blood-red flashes ! With the storm
Came the long rush of crowds, and wild lament,
As of a city sacked ! I heard the crash
Of falling towers, the trampling and the shout
Of bannered hosts, as they to victory marched ;
While ever and far off the mountain spirits
Sang in deep chorus, ' Victory ! Victory ! Victory ! '

FOURTH ADELRUNA.

I have been wandering where the wizard depths
Of Cheddar's chasms yawn like Hela's gulfs !
Where thunder-shivered pinnacle, and spire,
And rugged battlement, enwreathed with clouds,
O'er their elf-haunted caverns towering, fling
The dunnest pall of darkness. Through the gloom
Howled savagely the hungry wolf, and snuffed
The hollow blast as it had swept across
The battle-heath, encumbered with the slain ;
The raven flapped her wing with prophet croak,
And the strong eagle dashed the cloud aside
With her broad pinion, screaming for her prey.
Then came the ringing of the warriors' mail,
And shadows indistinct before me passed
In lurid-gleaming steel, whose dusky forms
Made darkness more obscure ; while unknown sounds
Of combat-music in their richness streamed
From mountain, steep, and tor.—There by me rushed
Sognor, the king of elves, with meteors crowned, (54)
On a pale steed, couching his beamy lance ;
And, as he smote his shield, there came a light
As of a wailing city wrapped in flames !

Then far and near shone out th' encrimsoned rocks
In that long-wavering blaze, and the red heavens
Echoed with frantic shrieks of ' Murder ! Murder ! '

FIFTH ADELRUNA.

By weird spirits led, I have been where
The waveless fountain, like a dead thing, lies
Amid the demon cavern of stern Ochus, (55)
And on the raven plumes of darkness sleep
Silence and death !—As musing there I stood
By the blue flame that from his eyelids streamed,
I saw the giant-dweller of that den
Armed with his iron mace—his stature reached
The black stupendous arch that frowned above,
And from his lips there came a muttered sound,
Like distant thunders—Silence fled in fear !—
' Death, go thou forth !—To-morrow shall the field
Be for thy banquet spread ! '—Death heard his voice,
And shook his phantom wings with joy, till rang
Th' abyss with fearful sounds.—They ceased, and then
I heard the dread night-whistler shriek for blood, (56)
Till every wide-arched rock and hollow cave
Yelled back the dismal cry of ' Blood ! Blood ! Blood ! '

Enter Cerdic, Oric, Cissa, and Porta.

CERDIC.

Say, ye diviners of the unborn years,
Ye sisters of the warlock spell and rune,
Skilled in the mysteries of our ancient sires,
Shall we against yon city draw the bow
At morning light, and on our banner-staves
The trophy-scalps of these vile Christians hang ? (57)

FIRST ADELRUNA.

Thou giver of the bracelet and the shield,
The lamp of war amid yon dusky clouds
The god of spells hath lit ; the viewless powers
Of nature call thee forth at early dawn,
Slayer of kings, to conquer and destroy !

SECOND ADELRUNA.

I, from the rushing torrents, heard a voice
Cry, ' Hail, great Cerdic ! war-king of the west !'

THIRD ADELRUNA.

I, from the mountain-tombs of ancient chiefs,
And tempest-clouds that round them make their dwelling,
Heard the wild chant of spirits, as they sang
Victory to Cerdic, mightiest in the Isle !

FOURTH ADELRUNA.

I, from those caverns that in darkness lie
Beneath the eternal precipice and peak
Which mortal foot ne'er dared, have heard the shout
Of th' elfish race, filling those solitudes
With thousand echoes, as they Cerdic hailed,
' The king of battles ! father of a line
On whose dominions in hereafter times
The sun shall never set !'

PORTA.

How wonderful !

And have ye heard, most wise prophetic women,
Your oracles *my* destiny pronounce ?

FIRST ADELRUNA.

Thou scorn'st our order, and revilst the gods ;
That smile proclaims thy unbelief ; but know,
A voice from the four winds hath gone abroad !—

Death, and oblivion, and no seat for thee
Amid Valhalla's golden halls of bliss !

PORTA.

Why, what reck I !—Let death come when it may,
Oblivion follows—'tis the fate of man ;
And for your dreams of Odin's drunken palace,
One cup below is sweeter far than all
The visionary draughts its wine-skulls yield.

Enter Priests, and a train of Scalds with their harps.

PRIEST.

Worship of battle, leader of the brave,
The milkwhite prophet steed, by torch-beam led,
Hath all the spears, arranged on yonder plain,
Passed with propitious omen ; set thou then, (58)
At morning light, the battle in array
'Gainst yon devoted city.

CERDIC.

Thanks, ye gods,
Your will shall be obeyed !—There is the sound
Of joy and revelry in Cæsar's towers ;
The city is ablaze with lights of triumph,
And on the night winds float the silver strains
Of bagpipe, timbrelon, and lute, and harp.
How silent at this hour will be to-morrow
Those desolated walls ! Yet shall there shine
A fiercer light on that dark sullen sky,
For then thy kingly chambers shall be wrapt
In one red conflagration !—
But where is Kenrick ?—He hath sworn to lead
Our battle-van, and be the first to plant
The white-horse banner on that city's gates.

PORTA.

Kenrick, my lord, was seen at twilight hour
To leap the entrenchments of the camp, and fly
On his fleet steed across yon misty plain,
No one knows whither.

CERDIC.

Fly ! impossible !——

Ah, now my heart misgives me !—Is he gone ?—
But let that for the present rest.—Ere morn
He will return, and be the foremost chief
Amid the ranks.—Princes, we'll to our tents,
And snatch a brief repose.

Enter Officer and Guards, with Mouric prisoner.

OFFICER.

Leader of hosts,
The watch placed at the western verge o' th' camp
This captive found, who, by his bearing, seems
A chieftain of high order.

CERDIC.

Who art thou ?

MOURIC.

A Briton—and, if rightly I have guessed,
Thou art the Saxon Cerdic.

CERDIC.

Thou speak'st truly.

What is thy business here ?

MOURIC.

To join my arms
With thine against the Britons. Thou behold'st,
Prince of the northern tribes, an injured chief,
Born of the blood of Albion's regal line.

Arthur, my kinsman, who to yonder towers
Ere night returned, and on the morning winds
Will fling his banner thee to meet in fight,
Cast me into a dungeon, hoping soon
To take my head ; but by a faithful slave
Was I conducted through a secret cave
Beyond the city walls.—Now, though I scorn
Death e'en as bravely as the bravest Saxon,
Yet would I win revenge ; then let me fall,
How soon no care have I.

CERDIC.

Revenge be thine,
If faithfully on our side strike thy sword.

MOURIC.

For that great purpose did I hither come.
While on the plain ye fight, give me a band,
And I will guide them through the cavin-way
To Cæsar's palace, and yon eastern gate
Fling wide at your approach.

CERDIC.

Come to our tent—
The banquet for the brave shall be prepared.
A noble manliness and comely grace
Adorn thy warlike port, that wins our heart.
May Nocca, spirit of the watery realms,
Feed on my veins when in the river floods
I bathe these war-worn limbs, if thou shalt not (59)
Be honoured in our court !—Come to the feast ;
Thy blood with mine shall in the wine-cup mingle,
In which our swords we'll dip, and lift the draught,
With solemn oath of friendship, to our lips,
Which earth nor heaven dissolves ! — Strike up the
song, (60)
The Scaldic war-song, to your laurelled harps.

CHORUS OF THE ADELRUNÆ AND SCALDS.

Banners in the light shall stream
Of the morning's purple beam,
And the golden clouds be riven
With battle-cries that swell to heaven !
Then shall burst the warrior's song
From man to man the ranks along ;
Thousand, thousand swords outflash,
Steed and chariot onward dash,
Where struggling valour shouting falls,
And the trumpet's death-hymn calls ;
Where, before the set of sun,
Victory's blood-wreaths shall be won.
Cerdic, Cerdic, mighty king !
Round yon towers thy fame shall ring,
As they sink amid the roar
Of rushing flames, to rise no more ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Plain—The Saxon Camp dimly seen
at a distance.*

Enter Gwennyfar.

GWENYFAR.

Methought the sound of music floated by ;—
Have not these heathen wassailers yet laid
The bowl aside for sleep?—I fear each moment
The rude grasp of some savage son of wine.—
Fear ! what have I to fear ? I, who am cast
From state, from all society, despised,
Shunned, and detested !—What if I repent ?
Eternal tears will not wash out my stains,

Stern, unforgiving mortals, in your eyes,
Nor penitence absolve ! No—I am fallen
Never to rise again !—Away then all
Contrition and remorse ! There's no forgiveness,
Not even in the grave !—Relentless man !
This cruelty hath, like a burning iron,
Seared my grief-wounded heart, and thus I fling
Repentance from me. Henceforth will I cherish
One only passion here—revenge ! revenge !
A terrible revenge on that stern king
Who had on me no mercy—who hath cast
Me forth to endure the extreme of wretchedness
That can befall a woman !—Hence with fear,
For I am now the genius of all evil,
And nothing can to me bring further ill !

Enter Cissa.

The midnight banquet, and the health-bowl passed
So freely round, have heated me, and I
Woo balmy sleep in vain.—I'll walk the rounds
Of the deep-slumbering camp. How sweet the winds
Breathe on my hot cheek freshness ! Tower and tent
Are silent all, save where the royal guests
Quaff in yon proud pavilion.—Gentle bird,
Companion of the night, thy music sounds
Far sweeter than the harp of drowsy scald
Amid the boisterous warriors.—How ! a woman !—
Alone ! at such an hour, so near the camp !—
Ye gods ! what beauty ! why, the setting moon
Lingers on yonder hill to gaze upon thee.

GWENYFAR.

O, that I now, like yon pale moon, could sink

Amid the rolling grandeur of the deep,
And sweet oblivion rest upon my name,
Trackless and dark, as o'er the storm-sunk wreck
The billows close for ever !

CISSA.

Why dost thou
So wildly look ? Beauty like thine might win
Homage, command, and love wherever seen.
But what has brought thee here ?

GWENYFAR.

Revenge ! revenge !

CISSA.

On whom ?

GWENYFAR.

Arthur, the Briton ! He hath thrust me forth
To wretchedness, to shame, to be the slave
E'en of the meanest soldier in yon camp !

CISSA.

A slave !—By Odin, thou shalt be a queen !
Thou owest him thy best thanks for sending thee
From yon proud city doomed to feed the flames.
Beauty has ever found with me protection ;
It is the only idol of my worship.
Joy to the hour I met thee—I have nine
Fair wives, and thou shalt, sweet one, be the tenth ;
The queen of queens ! for thou outshinest them all,—
And reign with me the empress of the South.

GWENYFAR.

What ! can it be thou hast nine wedded wives ?

CISSA.

Ay, 'tis the custom of our noble tribes ;
It is the regal mark of wealth, and power,
Honour, and high dominion.—Thou shalt have

A train of captive queens on thee to wait,
The handmaids of thy pleasure.

GWENYFAR.

Talk thou not
To me of pleasure ; give me great revenge,
And I am thine ; ay, soul and body thine !
Another step in guilt !—But I have strayed
Beyond the pale of virtue, and there now
Is no retreating from the gulf of crime !—(*Aside.*)

CISSA.

To-morrow will I seek this Arthur out
Amid the fiercest whirlwind of the fight,
And bring to thee his head.—Come to my tent ;
Thou shalt this very hour be made my bride.

GWENYFAR—(*with bitterness.*)

A bride !—Let me behold thy sword red with his blood,
Then hurl me in the flames of yonder city,
And let my dust be buried 'neath its ruins !

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Plain before the City of Sorbiodunum.*
Martial Music.

Enter Cerdic, Porta, Oric, Cissa, and Saxon Army.

CERDIC.

THE purple banners of the advancing sun
Already float on yonder eastern sky ;
But ours shall wear a deeper sanguine stain
Than those, ere nightfall comes. There is a stir
On Cæsar's city walls ; our trumpet notes
Have called the foe to action.—But say, where
Is the young Ætheling Kenrick—why doth he
Still loiter in his tent ? He should have been
The first amid these gallant ranks to gird
His seaxen on his thigh, and shake the light
From his refulgent mail of ring-wrought steel. (61)

PORTA.

Lord of the Northmen, Kenrick has been sought,
But empty stands his tent ; he to the camp
Is not, as yet, returned.

CERDIC.

Not yet returned !

Fly, seek him everywhere—search hill and vale !—
No—'tis in vain !—his passion hath undone him !
The twilight of his fame is on him fallen !

He is disgraced for ever ! I could pluck
My beard out by the roots with very madness !

CISSA.

The prince may yet arrive ere one brave sword
Clash on a British foeman's cloven helm.

CERDIC.

No !—he is lost ! to honour lost ! for love
Hath flung its spell of witchery o'er his heart,
And in the bowers of soft, voluptuous pleasure
Bound him a willing slave. May the dark prince,
That o'er the genii reigns of scorching fire, (62)
The curst enchantress blast ! who from his duty
Enticingly hath won him to her arms,
And darkened his young morn of bright renown !
May she—who is a Christian maid—for this
Hereafter sink to those abodes of crime
Which never sunbeam blest, where tempests rain
Eternal poisons, and devouring wolves
The guilty rend ; where Pain and Sickness lie
Howling for ever on their snaky beds,
And Torment dwells with Horror !

CISSA.

Goddess Freya !

Is that a place for beauty to abide in ?
Shame on thee ! I would have those made for love,
Of every creed, to cross the rainbow-bridge
That to the god's glad home of pleasure leads ;
There, by the honeyed fount of happiness,
On which the snow-plumed swans bright circles make
To their own melodies, the gentle creatures
Should, with the star-eyed destinies of Time,
Dance to the god-scald's harp beneath the ash,
The magic ash, whose silver leaves o'ershade

The crimson-clustered flowers of heaven's fair clime,
Till I arrived, led by the maids of war ;
Then should they in great Odin's solemn halls
Outpour for me the purple wine, and hail
My coming with soft smiles of rosy joy. (64)

PORTA.

Thy heaven above is still thy heaven below.
Pity thou couldst not make the last immortal,
Since that is certain, and none who have past
Death's iron portal ever yet returned
To blab of what's beyond.

CERDIC.

Hence with such folly !

Hear me, ye chiefs ; ye Saxon soldiers, hear.
This fair betrayer of my kenrick's honour,
My captive, whom I late was almost won
From the red knife to save, before you all
I, by the radiant mane o' th' sun's bright steed,
By the stern mother of death, by all the gods,
Swear to devote a victim at the altar !—
Father of battles, hear my solemn vow ;
Give me yon city, and the maid be thine !
On, gallant warriors ! onward to th' assault !
[*Shouts, flourish.—Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Before the Walls of the City.*

*Enter Arthur, Meridoc, Roderic, Clydoc, Knights, and
British Army, from the gates.*

ARTHUR.

The wolves of rapine are already roused
And howling for their prey.—We are prepared.

The sun begins to mount the golden skies,
And his first rays dance on our sparkling helms
With happy omen.—Lift our blest banner
Wide on the morning winds, and fling abroad
The battle-summons from the brazen throat
Of the deep-thundering dudag, till the sound (65)
From hill to hill re-echoes.

Enter Merlin.

MERLIN.

Back, great king!

Safe in thy towers remain another day.
I've seen a fatal vision! There have been
Accents of sorrow whispered from the clouds.
I heard the solemn abbey's choral swell
Floating along the dim and hollow aisles,
And there were strains of saint and martyrs' harp,
With angel voices, low and sadly sweet,
Chanting a requiem o'er the blood-stained bier
Of kingly warrior in his dark tomb laid!
Go thou not forth!—This day is marked for ill
In Britain's calendar! Woe to her empire!
The mighty pillar of the Cymry falls,
And all the goodly fabric it upheld,
In ruin sinks!—Hark to the hateful yells
Of triumph from the northern birds of blood!
The Saxon eagles on the fragments perch;
There shall they make their home, in kingly power,
And with their brood divide the noble spoil!

ARTHUR.

Prophet revered, recall thy gloomy words;
Dishearten not these valiant sons of war

With dark forebodings. Be it as it may,
I for my country and my God have drawn
This sacred sword, which I will never sheathe
While my strong arm can lift it in their cause,
Till I have swept the heathen from these shores !
Calmly as yonder sun, when tempests rise,
His course of glory follows, till he sets
Amid the crimson splendours of the west,
Will I, through battle-storm and danger press
To the bright goal of fame, though the red turf
Should my death-pillow be !

MERLIN.

Ay, he must set !

The sun, the light of Britain, set for ever !
A wailing and a lamentation rings
From shore to shore ! Gird sackcloth on your loins,
Children of Britain, for your sun goes down !
The demon of rebellion dashes him
From his bright sphere !—Our glory is departed !
Gone, gone ! for ever gone ! [Exit.

ARTHUR.

Rouse all, my knights, and mail yourselves in courage.
Arthur ne'er turned his back to proudest foe.
My country now is all that's dear to me !
And by the holy sangreal, blood of Christ, (66)
I here devote myself, if heaven so will,
A victim for my country ! Let me die
For her a blessed martyr ! but O, give,
Give her the victory, that I may depart
Triumphant in her glory !—Sound the charge !

[Exeunt—shouts, music.]

SCENE III.—*Another part of the Field.*

Enter, on one side, Cerdic, Oric, and Saxons ; on the other, Arthur and Britons.

ARTHUR.

Wolf of the north, demon of blood and death,
Again meet we in fight for Britain's crown !
Despoiler of my country, ocean-robber,
Why comest thou, like the red plague, on our shores,
With famine and destruction in thy train,
To curse the once happy dwellers of this isle ?

CERDIC.

Fool, 'tis the gods have sent us to these shores,
That we, the mighty, should the weak subdue. (67)
Why springs the yelling tiger on the stag,
The lion on the steed, his heart-blood quaffing ?
Why dashes from her cloud-encircled home
The eagle on the white flocks of the valley ?
Because the gods have to the powerful given
The courageless a prey.—Strength, strength is law,
And wide dominion, and by lawful conquest
This island is our empire.—Wilt thou, then,
Dare to dispute our title ?

ARTHUR.

Ay, to death !

There's not a Briton in the field this day
But will dispute it bravely. Saxon wolves,
Though bloodily ye leap into our fold,
Ye shall not find us lambs.—Sanctions no god
The title thou dost claim. Thy path is marked
With robbery, ruthless violence, and blood !
Justice, the attribute of heaven, thou scorn'st,

And all thy vaunt of power misused, is but
The savage triumph of a beast of prey.

CERDIC.

I came not here to bandy with thee words;
Deeds of the sword are my best arguments.
If thou wilt yield this city and the land
Far as where Avon with the Severn blends,
There shall be peace betwixt thy realms and mine.

ARTHUR.

Peace! There can be no peace with treacherous Saxons!
Shall I, who have for Britain's freedom fought
So many battles,—from the north returned,
Where the huge Colgrin fell beneath my sword,
While I his camp of plunder made my spoil,
And drove the Picts and Scots beyond the Tyne,—
Shall I yield thee the principedom of the west?
No—I demand the cities thou hast won,
For all the land is ours!—Go, get thee hence,
With these thy savage hordes of ocean-rovers!
Go, seek a kingdom on the stormy deep,
And mayst thou find thy palace in its caves! (68)

ORIC.

And why not claim *my* kingrick, too, of Kent, (69)
Which Vortigern to mighty Hengist yielded,
As tribute for protection to his throne
And craven subjects from the Scottish swords?

ARTHUR.

Darest thou to name that pirate—a disgrace
To valour and to manhood! He it was—
The wolf-eyed murderer!—who, on yonder plain,
Met, at the kingly feast of amity,
The princes and the elders of this isle.
There did that blood-dog, shouting to his clan

‘ Saxons, your blades uncover !’ draw his knife,
And to the heart the brave Ambrosius stab,
As he the wine-cup lifted to his lips,
Pledging the Saxon’s health ! Then rushed those slaves
On all the unarmed nobles of the land,
And strewed the splendid banquet with their limbs !
Britons ! sons of the slain ! yon temple-rocks
Are yet encrimsoned with your fathers’ gore ! (70)
Hear ye not, even now, those martyr-shrieks,
Those piercing cries in vain for life and mercy ?—
Still, still they ring from yonder fatal plain,
And call on you for vengeance !—Let them rouse
Your gallant spirits bravely to requite
That hour of blood and treachery !—Draw ! and be
The battle-word, Our fathers, and revenge !

CERDIC.

Awake the thunder of the sacred drums !
Ye prophet-matrons, chant the battle-song ! (71)
Flames for the city ! death to all the Britons !
(*Flourish, shouts, general battle—The Britons retreat
slowly before the Saxons.*)

SCENE IV.—*Another part of the Field—The City at
a distance. Alarums, excursions.*

Enter Arthur.

ARTHUR.

Good Caliburn, thou reek’st with Saxon blood
E’en to the hilt ! yet Saxons still prevail.
Mother of God, and all ye angel hosts,
Lend us swift aid against these heathen hordes,

Who with false rites our altars have defiled !
Here comes a noble foeman—Yield thee, chief !

Enter Porta.

Or feel the vengeance of this lifted brand.

PORTA.

Yield !—Never ! I have sent down Hela's gulf
Too many deadly-handed sons of war,
To cower beneath the arm of mortal strength.

(They fight, Arthur disarms Porta.)

ARTHUR.

Thou art my captive, but I will not take
Thy life, though forfeited ; my Christian faith
Forbids me to destroy a conquered foe.

PORTA.

Know, Christian, I despise thy proffered boon :
A Northman scorns to accept life's worthless gift
From his subduer ! Never shalt thou quell
Th' undaunted spirit ! I have vowed to die
Free as I've lived, nor be a captive slave,
But in my armour like a hero fall !
Still liberty is mine, and death's dark gate
My entrance into Odin's halls of pomp !
Thus laughingly I welcome the grim king—
(Stabs himself with his war-knife.)

Thus dash off chains and bondage !—and my blood
Hurl at thee in defiance !—Ha, ha, ha ! *(Dies.)* (72)
(Saxons driven across the field by Britons.)

ARTHUR.

Brave countrymen, the day shall soon be ours ! *[Exit.*

Enter Cerdic and Cissa.

CERDIC.

Fight, Saxons, to the last man ! Die or conquer !
Shrink not before the feeble blows of cowards.
Are ye not of the blood of that brave race
Who on the shores of every land in Europe (73)
Have made all nations quake ?—Another struggle,
And victory shall be yours ! Look on those towers :
There ample booty every soldier waits,
Who handles well his arms.—Hurl, slingers, hurl
Your vollied showers ; bend, archers, every bow,
And, like the lightning, launch your poisoned arrows.
Strike, swordsmen, strike on burganet and shield,
Like the huge mace of Thor !—To fame and plunder !
[*Exit.*

Enter Arthur.

ARTHUR.

Another sea-king !—Pirate dog, I greet thee
Thus for my injured country ! (*They fight, Cissa falls.*)
Thy dark reign
Of robbery's at an end.—Mother of God !
What do I see ?—The Saxon banner flings
Its white-horse folds from yonder palace towers !
What ho ! my knights ! my knights ! Treason and death
Enclose us round !—O, let my life atone,
Ye angry powers !—Take me, but spare my country !
[*Exit.*

Enter Oric and Withgar.

ORIC.

Ha ! Cissa fallen !

CISSA.

Witness, ye chiefs, I die
A fearless soldier's death.—Within yon tent
Waits my new queen, my best beloved, in vain,
To her all honours pay, and let her mount
My funeral pyre in state, that I may have
Due rites of sepulture.—Ye maids of war,
I hear your rushing steeds, I see your forms
Of brightness sweep across the blood-drenched field ;
Ye call me to the banquet of Valhalla—
I come, I come !——

(Dies.)

ORIC.

Such rites as do befit
A kingly soldier's burial shall be thine,
And noble rise thy green tomb on the plain,
A monument to future years. (74)

*[Exeunt.]**Enter Arthur.*

ARTHUR.

Ho ! Clydoc ! Roderic ! Yet for Britain strike !
Strike, till we fall together !—Ah, the day,
The day I fear is lost !—My bravest knights
Are on the plain, like red leaves strewed, when comes
The voice of autumn in the stormy gales.
Ha ! yonder gates are opened to the foe !—
O, I could lift my voice, and o'er thee weep,
City beloved—thy doom I see is come !
And soon shalt thou, a widow desolate,
In darkness sit, with ashes on thy head !
Mouric advances from her gates, and joins—
The double traitor !—with his country's foes !

Enter Mouric.

MOURIC.

Proud Arthur, we are once more met, where thou
Didst least expect to find me—where both no more
Shall part with life !—Hadst thou the victor been,
I had no mercy found—expect none now,
Tyrant, from me !

ARTHUR.

Mercy from thee, false coward !
Thou lecherous, loathsome, treason-spotted slave !
Thy country's basest foe ! with whom compared,
Cerdic in brightness like an angel shines !—
But thus do I my own and Britain's wrongs
Upon thy head repay.

(They fight, Arthur is severely wounded.)

MOURIC.

I would not quite
Destroy thee—linger on some hours in anguish,
To see the Saxons' triumph, and the fall
Of thy loved country !—'Twill add bitterness
To thy departing pangs !—So fare thee well.
I've won a brave revenge ! (75)

[Exit.]

ARTHUR.

O, thou hast won
Hell-blighting infamy !—Thy name shall stand
To future ages as a mark for scorn
And execration ! On thy head the ban
Of heaven and thy distracted country falls !

Enter Meridoc, Roderic, and Clydoc.

How goes the day ?—Is there yet any hope ?

MERIDOC.

Alas, there's none !—Thy bravest troops are slain !
The city by thy kinsman is betrayed,
The accursed Mouric, and the shouting Saxons,
Eager for plunder and bedrenched in blood,
Rush onward to our walls !

ARTHUR.

Rally again !
The Saxon ranks are in disorder thrown
With eagerness to reach the city gates !—
My standard ! ho, my standard ! Charge ! Dash on
them
Like famished lions !—Shout ! shout for the cross !
Arthur will lead you yet to—O——

(Faints in the arms of Meridoc.)

MERIDOC.

Sweet holy Virgin Mother !—He is dead !
And all is over !

RODERIC.

No, he yet revives.
Bind up his bleeding wounds.

ARTHUR.

O, my kind friends,
No longer can I for my country fight ;—
Weep not for me—'tis Britain claims your tears.
Soft—take me from the field, for all is lost,—
To Avalonia's isle would I be borne ;
There, by its holy fountain, may these wounds
Perchance be healed.—But if I die, the veil
Of dim uncertainty fling o'er my fate.
My warlike name will keep the patriot fire
That burns in Celtic hearts, for ever bright ;
And when in after years shall other chiefs

For Britain draw the sword, the wild harp's song
Will be of my return from fairy-land, (76)
To lead her gallant sons, and give them freedom !—
Stanch these red floods !—O Britain ! O my country !
(*Arthur is borne off.*)

*Grand flourish—Enter Cerdic, Oric, Withgar, and
Saxons.*

CERDIC.

Now the hard foughten field is bravely won,
And Cæsar's palace ours !—But Kenrick—may
The night-hag fasten on him !—he is far, (77)
With bloodless sword, far from this scene of glory !
Disgrace hath fallen on his war-honoured name !—
He who, ensheathed in valour, should have stood
Amid the battle, like a giant pine,
Wrestling with the dark tempests of the north,—
He lingers in the enchanted bowers of love,
And for a woman's smile hath lost his fame !

WITHGAR.

Worship of armies, these impatient bands
Thirst for the city's spoil.

CERDIC.

O, this deep grief,
And fierce resentment, and paternal love,
Make my wild bosom like the meeting place
Of many rivers, when the whirlwind sweeps
Their dark and troubled waters !—From my heart
I now could tear him, though twined round its strings,
Nor weep to see the headsman's fatal axe
Reeking with his warm blood !—The sorceress, she
Shall pay the forfeit due !—I do forget,

Busied with these sad thoughts, the work which yet
Is to be done.—Brave soldiers, on to plunder !
All, all is yours !—Slay, pillage, and destroy !
And let the queenly city blaze to heaven,
An offering to great Odin, for the victory !

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Plain of Sorbiodunum beyond the
Camp of the Saxons. The City at a distance.*

Enter Imogenia.

IMOGENIA.

KENRICK has brought me to the Saxon camp,
And wild is he to find that yonder towers,
Ere his return, are taken. Hapless city !
Thou art become a prey ; thy sons are led
Into captivity, thy daughters made
Slaves to a cruel foe. Yet is thy fate,
With all its terrors, blest, compared to mine !
No slave am I, yet deadlier misery far
On me is fallen—for I——O, what am I?—
Cold, maddening horror all my heart-blood chills
To think on what I am—a foul apostate !—
And now a fevered wildness on my brain
Comes, like a thunder-tempest, and I feel
As if possessed with demons !—Ah, the king !

*Enter Arthur, borne on a litter by British Soldiers ;
Meridoc, Roderic, and Clydoc.*

My brother ! O, my brother !

(Falls on his neck, and weeps.)

ARTHUR.

Holy Mary,

I thank thee that I live once more to see
My dear, loved sister, ere my spirit quits
This weary, war-demolished house of clay,
To find a better home.

IMOGENIA.

And is it thus
We meet again?—Thy cheek is deathly pale!
Is this the mighty hero of the battle,
The glory of the Cymri, and the shield
That guards his fallen country?

ARTHUR.

Fallen, indeed!
And I, who stood amid the fields of war,
Like a strong tower above the ocean floods,
Am levelled by the storm, and nought remains
But the surge-vanquished ruins!—Gentle sister,
(*Tempest at a distance.*)

Come from the horrors which surround thee here,
And refuge take in Avalonia's isle.
A tempest gathers in the darkened sky—
Look not so wildly—I may yet survive,
To hurl destruction on this Saxon king,
And all his race accurst.

IMOGENIA.

O, curse thou not
The race of Cerdic, for prince Kenrick is—

ARTHUR.

A pagan wolf!—and I'll yet hunt him down!

IMOGENIA.

O, not for worlds! you must be friends and brothers.

ARTHUR.

Brothers!—Ah me! thou art distracted grown
With long captivity.—Kenrick my friend!

No : sooner would I call the savage elk,
Or the fierce bison, with his shaggy mane (78),
Brother and friend, than grasp his pagan hand,
Red with my country's blood !—But I am faint,
And passion makes my wounds to bleed afresh——
Come, sister, come with me.

IMOGENIA.

I cannot go.

ARTHUR.

What ! wouldst thou tarry here, to be again
The slave of Saxons ?

IMOGENIA.

Not their slave—no, no—

But their loved queen——

ARTHUR.

My knights, convey her hence ;
Her wits do seem disordered.

IMOGENIA.

Touch me not !

My Kenrick calls me hence ; I must away,
He waits——

ARTHUR.

Thy Kenrick ! hell and madness !
A horrid, dark suspicion o'er me comes.
This Kenrick, this base pagan——

IMOGENIA.

Is—my husband !

ARTHUR.

Mother of God ! take, take my soul to thee ;
For this last blow hath struck me to the heart !
All maledictions light upon thy head !
Base one, accurst of heaven !

IMOGENIA.

Hold, Arthur, hold !

O, curse me not !—Alas, alas ! he faints !
I have destroyed my brother, and my soul
Given to the dreadful enemy of mankind !

(Storm increases.)

Ye blackly-rolling clouds, dark as my fate,
Your crimson vials of wrath on me outpour,
And quench your burning arrows in my blood,
That I may be at peace.—I merit all
Thine indignation, heaven ; but spare, prolong
My gallant brother's life !

ARTHUR.

And did I dream

My sister, whom so tenderly I loved,
From fame, from honour, and religion fallen,
Had to a pagan—Britain's bitterest foe—
Her hand in marriage given ?—Say, Imogenia,
For *my* sake say, that some malignant fiend
Has, in thy lovely form, belied thy truth.

IMOGENIA.

Ah me, my lord, 'twere false to say that I
Am not the wife of Kenrick.—But he is
So kind, so loving-gentle, and so noble—
Long I refused, till fondly won at last
By his perfections—

ARTHUR.

Dark perdition seize him !

May lightnings fasten on his form, till they
Change the betrayer to a blackened corse !
O, had I strength, wild with distracting rage,
I should wipe out the foul disgrace thus cast

Upon me with thy blood!—Yet tell me all;
How, when, where didst thou wed this pagan dog?

IMOGENIA.

I was devoted by the Saxon king
A captive victim to his gods of blood!
To save my life—no, not *my* life, but Kenrick's,
Who swore, if I would not become his bride,
He, at the altar of the dead, would plunge
The knife in his own heart!—

ARTHUR.

Ah! better far
Thy blood should o'er their hellish shrines have
gushed
Than thus, frail maiden, in thy weakness, yield
That beauty, blossoming on the kingly branch
Of ancient Christian lineage, to be plucked
By a vile pagan chief.

IMOGENIA.

O, had I fallen
A glorious martyr, then would heaven have flung
Her golden portals open to receive
The star-crowned Imogenia—now a sad,
Heart-broken wretch, bewilderingly I wander,
Mad with remorse and guilt!—Subdued by love,
I fell! I fell!—and, by my Kenrick led,
With virgin train, and wreath, and trumpet-peal,
At midnight to the temple of his gods,
Became his wedded wife. O, 'twas a scene
Of boundless horror! I am haunted still
With the remembrance of that dreadful hour,
When passion's joy and desolating crime
Closed round me like the storm, on whose dark skirts

The sunbeams with the pale and ghastly lightning
For day's dominion struggle.

MERIDOC.

Hapless lady !

IMOGENIA.

The hideous fragments of a human victim
Lay smoking on the altar, smeared with blood !
Above the flames, like a grim giant, stood
The Saxon god of war, in brazen arms,
That o'er the place, where holy mysteries once
Were celebrated of the Christian faith,
Dusky refulgence shed. A crowd of priests
And prophet-women gathered there, with knives
And hands dyed in the slaughtered victim's gore,
Darkly around me ; while terrific music
Along the hollow temple rose and fell,
Like those strange sounds that come from ocean-caves,
When the forewarning spirits of the storm
Fling on the winds the muttered spells of shipwreck.
Then was I led to cast into the flames
Incense to Thor and Odin, and renounce
All faith in Christ !——

ARTHUR.

And didst thou, couldst thou do

A deed so horrible ?

IMOGENIA.

I did ! I did !

And lost me heaven !—Yet smooth that brow of wrath—
O, hast thou ever felt what 'tis to love
With wild enthusiast passion ? If thou hast,
Some little pity still must in thy heart
Be found for thy poor sister. 'Twas to save
My Kenrick from the tomb that I became

A base apostate.—Long did I refuse ;
Till moved the frightful statues of the gods,
As if with life inspired, and yell, and hiss, (79)
Came from their stony lips, with words unholy,
Denouncing death to Kenrick, if I dared
Refuse to be a pagan. Redder seemed
To glow the war-god's armour ; and methought
From the dim cloud of smoke that round him rose,
Glared fiendish eyes ; and shapes of ghastliness,
On pinions bright with lightning, hovered o'er me !
Then through the aisles a thousand thunders broke,
In long and awful peal, to their foundations
The ponderous arches shaking ! and each pause
Was filled with dirge-like wailings, as of ghosts
Wandering in torment ! From the altar-stone
The victim-skeleton raised his fleshless arm,
Black with the guilty flames ! Wildly I shrieked
With frantic horror, and the incense flung
Upon the dead man's bones amid the fire,
When the vast temple far and wide was wrapped
In one undying blaze, while laughter rang,
From spirits immortal, in my frenzied ears,
And all hell seemed around me !

ARTHUR.

Take me hence ;
I feel life ebbing fast.—I cannot bear
To look on one whom once I held so dear,
Now lost to me, to heaven, and to her country !
O, let me die, for I have sister, wife,
And empire lost !—O, wretched, wretched Arthur !

[*Exeunt—Arthur is borne off.*]

IMOGENIA.

Yet for one last embrace !—He's gone for ever !

I am cast off, abandoned, and accursed!
Why dart the flame-bright shafts of angry heaven
Above my head, yet scorn to strike a wretch
That loathes existence, and seeks death in vain!

Enter Kenrick.

KENRICK.

Why, dearest Imogenia, wanderest thou
From the protection of my watchful love,
When, drunk with conquest, wild disorder reigns
Throughout the Saxon camp, and rape and murder
Are at their bloody work? Nay, look not thus
Despairful, dear one.—Thou art deathly cold—
With me there's safety. Let this fond embrace
Warm thee to life and pleasure in these arms.

IMOGENIA.

Ah, thy love-beaming eyes shine on my woe,
Like the bright sun which from the tempest breaks
In glory o'er the ruins of that land,
Where with destruction and with death hath passed
The hill-uprooting earthquake! Leave me, prince,
Leave me to wander in the desert world,
Far from the home of man, where I may find
Some lonely cave in which to weep and die.

KENRICK.

Die! all the gods forbid. And wouldst thou leave
Thy Kenrick to despair?—I who am driven
Almost to madness, who have honour, fame,
And warlike glory lost? Was not the wreath
Of battle won, and I not in the field?
The city taken, while with thee I lingered
Far from the scene of triumph? Shame is fallen,

Deep, deadly shame, on my inglorious head !
I have lost all for thee !

IMOGENIA.

No, thou hast yet
Thy better part preserved. Thou mayst be saved—
Become a Christian, and a kingdom waits
Thy happy spirit in the realms of bliss :
A kingdom and a crown, whose splendours will
Outshine the sun, and be immortal when
His orb shall from its golden sphere be dashed,
And darkness quench his lustre.—I have cast
Deep midnight on that beam of Deity
Which lighted up this clay. Dark, dark am I,
Save when the lurid fires of hell blaze forth,
Still burning, burning here !

KENRICK.

Sweet Imogenia, peace—— (*Storm.*)

IMOGENIA.

Peace !—No, I'm doomed to everlasting woe !
Hark ! how those terror-sounding thunders roll !
Spirits of wrath from their fleet pinions shake
The lightning's blood-red vengeance on the guilty !
(*The City appears in flames.*)

It is the voice of HIM I have renounced !
It speaks dread condemnation to the apostate !
Hear'st thou not those soul-harrowing shrieks of murder
From yonder towers ?—And see, the flames ascend !
The city blazes to the clouds ! The clouds
Dash downward fire on fire ; and earth and heaven
Are in one awful conflagration wrapt !
Away, away ! I'll mount the battlements,
And leap into the burning gulf below !
[*Rushes wildly off, Kenrick endeavouring to restrain her.*]

SCENE II.—*The Pavilion of Cerdic illuminated with the distant fire of the City.*

Enter Cerdic, Oric, Withgar, Saxon Officers, and Soldiers.

CERDIC.

City of Cæsar, who didst proudly sit
Queen of the West, high on thine ancient throne,
Scorning to yield, how art thou humbled now !
The tempest, as it fans thy funeral pyre,
Howls forth its joy, and all our mighty gods
Shout o'er thy fall, making the hollow arch
Of heaven resound with thunder ! Arthur slain,
Or fled disgraced for ever ; our great triumph,
Chieftains, is now complete, and we have fixed
The Saxon monarchy in this fair isle
Immoveable, till o'er the world shall come
The twilight of the gods.

ORIC.

Cissa is fallen,
And Porta feasts with Odin—all the South
Will we divide between us.—That bold stroke
Of policy shall to my throne of Kent
Give the Bretwaldaship o'er all the Saxons.—(*Aside.*)

CERDIC.

Agreed, brave son of Hengist.—Withgar, thou
The thane shall be of Guithor's isle, that rears
Its white cliffs o'er the southern main, and drive
The Britons out, or make them all thy slaves.
But, sad to say, a dark cloud comes across
The brightness of my conquest. He who stands

Next in degree to our war-gotten throne,
Has on his shield of honour cast a stain
Which blood must soon wash out. He, I am told,
With his fair captive maid of royal line,
Is to the camp returned.—Bring the disgraced——

WITHGAR.

Queller of kings, he comes.

Enter Kenrick.

CERDIC.

Thou recreant slave !—

That I should live to call one, in whose veins
The blood of Cerdic flows, by such a name !
Thou hast thy birth dishonoured, and plucked down
That shame, which most a gallant soldier fears,
Upon thy head, its garlands blasting all !
How canst thou answer to these eorls and thanes
For battle-vows by thee so basely broken ?

KENRICK.

I own, redoubted lord of bannered hosts,
With shame I own, that I have failed in duty
To these brave warriors and the Saxon nation.
But thou, and all who in thy presence stand,
Will, for those deeds my battle-blade has done
In other fields, acquit me here this day
Of cowardice, that basest crime which stains
The soldier's name. When I these war-tents left,
I thought at morning-light to stand amidst
The foremost in the ranks.—Love, powerful love—
And who among the sternest of you here
Has lived till now, and never felt its influence ?—
'Twas love my absence claimed. A captive maid,
Whose beauty not those goddesses that dwell

In Odin's halls can equal, by my sire
Was doomed to death, if she consented not
To worship at our altars: 'twas to win
Her to our faith, to save her life, and make
The lovely one my bride, that lost me all
The fame I should this day in fight have won.
But here I pray by Irminsul's red banner, (80)
His blood-besprinkled altar and his shield,
My death may not be on the corse-strewed plain,
Nor my last bed the warrior's crimson pyre,
If I do not retrieve my glory lost,
In the next battle field.

CERDIC.

There is one way,
One only way by which thy blighted wreaths
Can bloom again,—by which thou canst restore
Thy tarnished honour to its wonted brightness,
And be my son again.

KENRICK.

O, name it, name it !

CERDIC.

Lead to the altar her who tempted thee
Thy battle vow to break, and plunge thy knife,
As Odin's priest, in Imogenia's heart !

KENRICK.

She is my bride ! my bride ! my wedded bride !

CERDIC.

The nobler then the sacrifice which thou
Shalt make to injured honour !—Not ten cities
Sacked by thy sword shall raise thy fame so high,
Or win such worship from the Saxon host,
As this heroic deed !

KENRICK.

Hell-deed of murder !

She has her gods abjured, and bowed the knee
Before great Odin's image !

CERDIC.

Well, young prince,
The worthier is she then to be an offering
To him the lord of battles, who will now
Into his paradise the maid receive
With all the pomp of heaven, and place her near
His thunder-throne of glory. (81)

KENRICK.

At thy feet

The wretched Kenrick kneels to thee for mercy !
Soften that solemn sternness in thine eye,
Nor, for one error, plunge thine only son,
Like a huge billow, rushing o'er the wreck,
To wild despair's dark gulf !—I cannot live
If thou bereave me of my Imogenia !
O, think how tenderly thou lovedst me once,
And, when a boy, how in the art of war
Thou schooledst me ever with a father's pride.
And have I not, till now, thy bright track followed,
As, near its parent's wing, undazzled, soars
The sun-born eaglet in the cloudless blaze ?

CERDIC.

Dishonoured vows have dashed thee from thy sphere ;
Thy lofty claims are perished in their brightness,
As falling stars are in the tempest lost.

KENRICK.

The crowned with conquest and with empire, thou
Shouldst in thy glory that compassion feel
Which o'er the victor flings the brightest lustre,

Which to the laurel all its splendour gives.
Let a kind father plead for his lost son ;
Listen to thine own heart, and mercy there
Will find her home of love, will o'er the storm
And whirlwind passions of this bosom fling
The sunbeam of forgiveness.
O, yield me Imogenia, and for aye
Banish me hence, a wandering, outcast slave :
Crowns, empires, all will I give up to save
My Imogenia's life !

CERDIC.

Weak-minded boy !—

Where is she now ?

KENRICK.

Alas, in yonder tent.

CERDIC.

Go, place a guard, with all due honour, round her.
Prepare the awful rites ! Call every priest
And prophet-matron to the solemn scene. (82)

[Exeunt Officers.]

KENRICK.

Hear, father, hear my cries of wild despair !
If ever pity touched thine iron heart,
O save her, save her from the bloody knife !

CERDIC.

Hear *me*, my son—Heaven witness that I feel
For thy distress ; but not, like thee, dare I
Break for a woman, though more beautiful
Than the bright queen of elves, my solemn oath.
Before the sun, the army, who my vow
All witnessed, on the battle-eve I swore,
By Odin, mighty spell-god ! if he gave

The city to our swords, I at his shrine
This captive maid in sacrifice would offer.

(Soldiers shout, A sacrifice ! A sacrifice !)

KENRICK.

Stern-minded sons of battle, scorn ye thus
The anguish of a brother warrior's heart ?—
Keep thy dread oath, and I'll the victim be !
My blood shall Imogenia's life redeem.
Here is my naked bosom—soldiers, strike !
Strike to the heart ! Fulfil my father's vow !

CERDIC.

Away ! thou ravest—thy passion maddens thee.

KENRICK.

Mad let me be !—O, for the thunder's might
To hurl the red hot bolts—No, not on thee—
Not on thy head, my father. I'll endure
The miseries of my fate a little longer ;
Endure with bravery, and with bravery die.

[Exit.]

CERDIC.

I can the starting tear restrain no longer.—
Shame to the Saxon soldier ! 'tis unseemly.
What must the father's feelings be, when they
Can make e'en Cerdic weep !—Let me be firm.
Kenrick, though priest of Odin, will not smite
The victim-bride—Nature forbids the blow ;
But if not guarded will himself destroy.
Demand his sword, watch him with care, and let
The Adelrunæ take the captive's life. *[Exeunt Officers.]*

Enter Officer.

OFFICER.

Mouric, the Briton, who betrayed the city,
Was by a woman slain amid the streets,

Who, from a burning tower, hurled on his head
A mighty stone.

CERDIC.

It was a just reward.

(*The body of Cissa is brought in by Soldiers on their shields.*)

My gallant prince, thou hast right nobly fallen ;
And for thy funeral shall a stately pyre
Blaze to the midnight clouds.

ORIC.

He did request,
When dying on the field, his best-loved queen,
Now in his tent, might mount the smoky pile,
And join him in Valhalla's blissful halls.

CERDIC.

Withgar, go lead the honoured lady here,
She on a gorgeous throne of fire shall sit,

[*Exit Withgar.*]

A crowned queen in majesty and pomp.
Seven war-steeds shall of noble breed be slain,
And seven brave British captives of yon city,
To his departed shade. Fling on the pyre
The regal banner and the golden shield, (83)
The glittering mail, the gore-empurpled robe,
And let the scalds with harp and trumpet sound
The chieftain's fame, that Odin's cloudy halls,
As he ascends, their thunder-crashing gates
May open fling, and gods and heroes hail,
With loud acclaim, the warrior's kingly coming.

Enter Gwennyfar and Withgar.

GWENYFAR.

The deadly strife and the wild shriek have ceased

In yonder streets, where all is desolation !
Thou, like a black and burning mountain, stand'st,
O city of the sun ; and o'er the heavens,
As flaming fragments fall of tower and temple,
Rush upward crimson streams !—Where stay so long
Thy chariot-wheels, O warrior of the south ?—
Why comest thou not from the red fields of death ?
Revenge waits for thee, with her vulture glance,
Claiming the blood-stained trophy of thy sword.—
Ha, dead !—cold on his gory shield he lies.
Would I were sleeping with him !

CERDIC.

Soon thy wish
Shall be accomplished. Hail, fair lady ! I
Now wait to lead thee in proud triumph forth
To mount the funeral pile of thy dead lord !
High on his death-throne shalt thou sit a queen,
With purple flames of glory curtained round.
And, happy pair, as ye to ashes sink,
Amid the shoutings of the Saxon host,
And victor-song from pealing trump and harp,
Your spirits to the skies shal upward soar,
Attended with due pomp of captive slaves,
And banquet 'mid the gods.

GWENYFAR.

Away, dark chief !
I'll not endure thy demon-glance of scorn ;
I will not be the mock and scoff of pagans,
Nor mingle in their horrid rites of blood.

CERDIC.

The mock and scoff !—When on the flame-pile throned,
Thou wilt be worshipped by the Saxon host
As a bright goddess.

GWENYFAR.

What! must I be burnt?

Consumed to ashes? feel the hungry flames
Feed on my quivering limbs while yet alive?
O, I will rend the heavens with my shrieks!
Fiends! murderers! monsters!—Is it come to this?—
Guilt, thou hast brought these horrors on my head.
O, Mouric, Mouric! had I never listened
To thy betraying tongue, I had been blest.

CERDIC.

Fire the red pile, and chain her to its summit!

GWENYFAR.

Blood-wolves and demons! curses on you light!
Accursed are your hell-like customs all!
Flames! flames! I feel them scorching to the bone!
Flames here, and flames hereafter, which will burn
Unquenchable!—My brain, my brain's on fire!
Death, death!—O, for eternal death!
[Gwenyfar is led off.]

CERDIC.

These are your coward, Christian wives, who shrink
From that high glory which awaits the brave.
Sound all the trumpets there, and let the drums
Her maniac ravings drown. The hour draws near
In which this captive-bride must be led forth,
And yield her spirit to our warrior-god.

[Music.—Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*The Tent of Kenrick.*

Imogenia and Kenrick discovered on a couch.

IMOGENIA.

Grieve not, my dearest Kenrick ; I'm resigned,
And calmly wait my summons to the grave.
This scene of woe and suffering soon will close,
And I shall die the martyr's glorious death,
And expiate my crime. I feel no more
The terrors of the apostate. Dark despair
Yields to a heavenly dawn of peace and hope.
I shall find mercy at the throne of God,
Through Him, the sinner's friend.

KENRICK.

I have no hope on earth ! When thou art gone,
No sun will shine for me ! O, that my blood—
How freely would I shed it !—might redeem
Thy life, my Imogenia.

IMOGENIA.

We shall soon,
If thou wilt be a Christian, meet again ;
Meet where no cruel father shall divide us.—
Hark to that music !—not of earthly strings :
It has a sound of heaven.—Thou hear'st it not.
It is the requiem-lay of martyr-band.
Sun-radiant pinions glance through yonder cloud,
Waiting to bear me hence.—Those blessed strains
Breathe pity and forgiveness.—Weep not thus—
A few short moments, and I shall be happy.

KENRICK.

While I, till death release me, must endure
Those heart deep agonies no time can heal,

Not one faint ray o'er my despair shall gleam,
For thou wilt on thy Kenrick smile no more !

IMOGENIA.

Alas for me !—I would restrain my grief,
But when I look on that pale brow, I feel
The martyr's strength expire, and fond affection
Bursts forth in floods of tears.—Ah, my loved Kenrick !—

(Falling on his bosom.)

Yet, for thy Imogenia's sake, be calm——
Aid me, O aid me, to support his anguish,
For my poor heart is breaking !—When thine eye
Shall gaze hereafter on that beauteous star,
Now setting o'er those mountains of the west,
Wilt thou not think of thy loved Imogenia,
And this sad parting hour ?

KENRICK.

O, never more
Shall I behold that bright star of the west.—
Kenrick with thee will die !

IMOGENIA.

All heaven forbid !

No fatal mischief on thyself commit.
I would depart in the fond hope that we,
Ere long, shall meet again in brighter worlds.
My spirit o'er thy midnight couch shall watch,
And oft shalt thou behold thy Imogenia
Brighter, far brighter, in thy happy dreams ! *(Music.)*

KENRICK.

They come, they come to tear our hearts asunder !
Relentless father !—O, my Imogenia,
I cannot give thee up ! I'll twine these arms
Thus round thy neck, and he that strikes shall wound
Thine through my bleeding heart !

IMOGENIA.

Let this sad kiss,

This farewell kiss—it is, it is the last !

O, let it calm the wildness of thy soul,

And be it long remembered on thy lips !——

Now summon all thy manly fortitude

To say farewell for ever !——

(Kenrick remains motionless with grief.)

Indeed, indeed, for young hearts, bound so closely

In love's strong bands, 'tis dreadful thus to part !

O, ye bright saints and martyrs, for your strength

To bear this awful trial——

For thee to Heaven I lift my latest prayer,——

O, mayst thou be a Christian !—Nay, yet speak,—

Sweet Kenrick, speak—O, let me once more hear

Thy soothing voice !—Dear Kenrick, say farewell !

Enter Cerdic, Oric, and Withgar; a train of Priests with torches and the sacred fire; the chief Adelfrith bearing the sacrificing-knife, followed by Prophetesses and Virgins with garlands. Scalds, with harps and trumpets; Saxon Officers and Soldiers, carrying the white-horse banner, &c., forming a grand procession, to wild and solemn music.

FIRST ADELFRITH.

Come, victim-bride, the altar for thee waits.

IMOGENIA.

Hear me, dark war-king of the lion-glance.

Ye savage women, and ferocious priests,

Lift up your eyes to yonder gorgeous heavens :

Behold how He, the eternal God of gods,

Has showered yon sapphire depths with golden orbs,

And filled all worlds with life, and joy, and love :
Can such a God delight in altars heaped
With smoking flesh, and mangled limbs, and blood ?
No; the pure sacrifice which HE requires,
Is love to Him, and mercy unto all,—
For HE o'er all hath still a father's care.
Ye know him not, remorseless, proud destroyers !
Yet earth and heaven are splendid with His shadow !
Yon stars are but the dust of his bright path ;
His dark pavilion is the stormy cloud ;
His voice the thunder, and His smile the sun !
The years will come, when your false gods and faith
Shall vanish from the earth, and be the dream
Dark of the ages past.—One moment more——
Hear, all ye Saxons ; hear, ye martyr-bands,
Who gloriously have passed through flames and blood ;
And all ye cherubim, who yonder sit
High on your golden thrones of brightness, hear,
And witness that, with deep contrition, I
Renounce all pagan gods, and die a Christian !

(The music strikes up, and the procession begins slowly to move, with Imogenia placed between the Priest with the sacred fire and the Adelfrunda with the sacrificing-knife. Imogenia extends her arms to take a last farewell of Kenrick, who, starting, rushes towards her.)

KENRICK.

I come ! I come ! O, Imogenia, O !

(Falls : Imogenia shrieks, and falls on him.—The characters form a picture round them.)

NOTES.

- (1) *Cymbals, trumpets, and clashing of spears.* . . p. 415.

Cymbals were used by the Saxons, as may be seen in Bede, vol. viii. 1062.

- (2) *A triumphal car of shields, hung with garlands, and borne by Saxon soldiers.* . . p. 415.

Among the northern nations their new king was carried on the shoulders of their chiefs or senators; from which custom we preserve, says the translator of Northern Antiquities, in England to this day, the relic of carrying our members of parliament, as soon as they are elected, in chairs on the shoulders of the burghesses.

- (3) *ye have set the crown
Of a new kingdom on these war-scathed brows.* . . p. 415.

The crown was always elective among the early Saxons.

- (4) *I now swear
To observe the laws, defend my new-won power,
On every side extend my kingdom's limits.* . . p. 416.

This was the exact coronation oath of the Saxon war-kings.

- (5) *By Nazanleod led from many realms.* . . p. 416.

Nazanleod fell in battle, leading the greatest army that the Britons had ever assembled to check the progress of the Saxons. He was slain with five thousand of his followers; and so great was the disaster, that the region far around the scene of conflict was

for ages called by his name. This place has been long disputed by authors; but as the Saxon name of the New Forest was Ytene, which certainly has a great affinity to Natan, pronounced Nætæn, we think the learned Dr. Milner perfectly right in assigning the scene to the New Forest.

- (6) *and made thy fame immortal*
As our great father-gods ! . . p. 416.

It is well known that all the Saxon kings derived their genealogy from Odin, the Scandinavian god of war.

‘The Gothic nations, according to their different dialects, called him by various names, as WODEN, ODEN, ODIN, OTHEN, and GODAN and GUODAN. The Saxons called him Eopðen, and the Dutch GUODEN. Sometimes he was called WODE, ODE, GODE, and GUODE; and also WOEN and GOEN. He is sometimes called ALL-FATHER, the father of the gods; and WAL-FATHER, the father of Slaughter, because they are all his beloved sons who fall in battle, whom he takes to himself into his palace, called WALHOLL, and WINGOLF, where they are called GINHERIAR, that is, the only heroes.’—*Brit. Antiq. Illustra.*

The Anglo-Saxons and the Danes paid the highest honours to Odin; the Norwegians and Icelanders to Thor; and the Swedes to Friga.

- (7) *and all his men of might,*
Whom I devoted to the god of war. . . p. 416.

‘The warriors of the North, who went to battle, made a vow to send Odin a certain number of souls, which they consecrated to him. The souls were Odin’s right; he received them into Valhalla, his ordinary place of residence, where he rewarded all such as died sword in hand.’—*North. Antiq.*, vol. ii. p. 75.

- (8) *Henceforth that noble city shall be called*
Win-ceaster. . . p. 416.

Winchester.—‘Its magnificent cathedral was made subservient to the gloomy and impure rites of the Saxon idols, Thor, Wodin, Frea, and Tuisco.’—*Dr. Milner’s Hist. of Winchester.*

They had a temple (Pontamus M. Adamus) all wrought with gold, in which was exposed to view three of their principal gods.

(9)

*I am one**Who minister before great Odin's shrine. . . p. 417.*

'They often united the priesthood and the sovereignty in their own person, after the example of Odin. And it was in consequence of that custom that, in later times, kings still performed some functions of the priesthood, or set apart their children for an office so highly revered.'—*North. Antiq.*

(10) *By our famed father's runes and magic spells. . . p. 417.*

'The same ignorance which made poetry to be regarded as something supernatural, persuaded them also that the letters or RUNIC characters, which were then used by the few who were able to write and read, included in them certain mysterious and magical properties.'—*North. Antiq.*

'It is sufficient to know that the word RUNA, in its proper sense signifying *letters*, is of great antiquity, and higher than Wodin, and is derived, in all probability, from RYN, a *furrow*; but the abusive acceptance of it for *magic* is more modern, begun in the time of Wodin, when the people were persuaded by their priests and impostors, that the characters themselves had a secret power and operation in them to work miracles.'—*Brit. Antiq. Illustra.*

'Wormius says, that the Gothic race gave themselves names from these runes. From whence came *Guthrun*, or Gothic Runn; *Sigtrun*, or victorious Runn; *Runulpher*, helping Runn; *Rungeir*, warlike Runn: so with women, *Solruna*, *Sigruna*, *Ofruna*, *Auruna*, &c. &c.

(11) *Have, in mysterious songs, amid the temple,
Chanted dominion, power, and boundless glory. . . p. 417.*

'They (the Goths) had oracles, like the people of Italy and Greece; and these oracles were not less revered, nor less famous than theirs. It was generally believed, either that the gods and goddesses, or, more commonly, that the three destinies, whose names I have given elsewhere, delivered out their oracles in their temples.'—*M. Mallet.*

(12) *To Cerdic and his line, whose ancient house
Has for its founder our chief god himself. . . p. 417.*

Cerdic was reckoned the tenth in descent from Odin.

Gibson expressly says, 'It is from Odin all our royal families derive their descent.'

(13) *My sword and battle-axe are all the gods
To whom I homage yield. . . p. 417.*

'From the earliest antiquity they paid divine honours to their swords, their battle-axes, and their pikes. The Scythians commonly substituted a sword as the most proper symbol to represent the supreme God.'—*M. Mallet.*

(14) *nor do I heed the creeds
Of Christian or of Pagan. . . p. 417.*

In the history of Olave, king of Norway, a warrior publicly declares that he relies more on his own strength, and on his arms, than upon Thor or Odin. Another says, in the same work, 'I would have thee know, that I believe neither in idols nor spirits; I have travelled in many places; I have met with giants and monstrous men; they could never overcome me; and to this hour my own force and courage are the sole objects of my belief.'

'But the followers of the prevailing religion sometimes *punished* these irreligious persons. In the above work mention is made of a man who was *condemned to exile* for having sung, in a public place, verses to this purpose:—"I will not insult or affront the gods; nevertheless, the goddess Friga inspires me with no respect. It must certainly be, that either she or Odin are chimerical deities."—This last line, perhaps, should be, neither she nor Odin are anything to us.'—*M. Mallet.*

(15) *but, by the white
And holy steed of prophecy, I swear. . . p. 417.*

'Besides the inspection of the entrails of beasts, they (the Saxons) especially observed the neighing of horses. For this purpose the whitest that could be picked out were kept, at the public charge, in groves and places set apart for them. These were never set to common work, but drew the holy chariot, which was followed by the priest and king, or prince of the city. Their presages, of all others, carried the greatest credit, both with priest, people, and prince; for they looked on themselves as the *servants* of the gods, but on these horses as their *intimates*.'—*Brit. Antiq. Illustr.*

I have no hesitation in asserting, that the worship which the Anglo-Saxons paid to white horses, was the origin of those figures of white horses which are to this day seen on the sides of many hills in different parts of England :—for instance, the one in Berkshire, which Wise, and other writers adopting his opinion, have, I consider erroneously, ascribed to Alfred, as a trophy of his great victory over the Danes at Ashdown. The enormous giant cut out on the side of a hill above the town of Cerne in Dorsetshire, is not only considered to be of great antiquity by antiquarians, but also to be a representation of some Saxon god. He was called, says the historian of that county, Heil. But, from the circumstance of his having a large club in his hand, I think it far more likely to be an image or figure of Thor with his mace, the only weapon that god is supposed to have used. There is one of the sacred horses near Westbury in Wiltshire, well cut; and another on a hill not far from Marlborough in the same county. They are of high antiquity, and still venerated by the common people. Tradition ascribes them all to Alfred; but I believe them to be of far earlier origin, and designed not only as sacred objects of worship and veneration, but also as noble and imperishable monuments of the proud triumphs and conquests of the pagan Saxons over Christianity and its followers the Britons.

(16) *I, lord of shields, only believe in him*

Who made yon sun, the fulgent torch of heaven. . . p. 418.

Harold Harfagre, the first king of all Norway, declared in the midst of a large assembly of his people, 'I swear and protest, in the most solemn manner, that I will never offer sacrifice to any of the gods adored by the people, but to him only who hath formed this world, and every thing we behold in it.'

(17) *The proud Bretwaldas of the Saxon realms.. . p. 418.*

The *Bretwalda* was a title assumed by the chief king of the Saxon octarchy, whoever he might be at the time; similar in import to the British Pen-dragon, or Pen-teyrn, implying the chief king. The British *Unbenaeth*, and the Saxon *Britwaldaship*, was the headship or monarchy over all the tribes.

(18) *Weeps golden tears, and reigns the queen of love. . . p. 418.*

'Freya, the goddess of love; the Norne, who weeps golden tears,'—Vide the *Edda*.

- (19) *Nine to the bridal couch*
Have I already led. . . p. 418.

‘ Among the Goths, men of wealth and power considered a number of wives as a mark of grandeur ; and, according to Tacitus (Germ., c. 20), political reasons also sometimes brought about these matches. The Christian religion, not without great difficulty, got the better of this custom ; which still prevailed in the North so late as the TENTH CENTURY. One of the wives seems to have possessed a superior rank, and to have been considered as the chief and most legitimate. But as it was her distinguished prerogative to accompany her lord *to the grave, or funeral pile*, she would hardly be an object of envy or jealousy among the ladies of the present age.’—*North. Antiq.*

- Mud-suffocated, a base coward's death. . . p. 419.*

Among the laws of the Germans was one which condemned cowards to be suffocated in mud, covering them over with hurdles.

- (20) *A greater prince than he—the DRAGON-KING,*
Arthur, renowned in battle. . . p. 419.

The seventh historical Triad asserts Arthur to have been the Pen-teyrn, the Pen-dragon, the head or chief king of all the Britons.

‘ Cassi-vellaunus, or Cassi-bellinus, the Belin, or king of the Cassii, was created the Pen-dragon, or commandant of the kings. Cuno-Belin, signifying the head king, was his successor in the Pendragonship. Caractacus was undoubtedly the Pendragon of the Britons ; as is equally implied in the name Cara-tac, Caratog, or head king.’—*Vide Hist. of Manchester.*

- (21) *Go, bid yon bowmen*
Discharge a shower of arrows winged with fire. . . p. 421.

‘ Bow.—This is said not to have been a weapon of war among the Anglo-Saxons ; but a plate in Strutt, and a passage in Asser Menevensis, which calls bows and arrows instruments of war, prove the contrary. Both the *sling* and *bow* were used by the Franks, as the Salic law shows, though certain historians have advanced the contrary. They even used poisoned arrows ; for thus they destroyed the army of Quintius in the wood.’—*Fosbrooke's Ency. Antiq.*

The Saxons also used poisoned arrows.

Grotius proves that the Scythians or Goths, who spoke the Getic tongue, from whom the Anglo-Saxons derive their origin, and in whose language the etymology of many English words is to be found, took their name from *Shieten*, which signifies, in their tongue, to shoot, because they were EXCELLENT ARCHERS; and *rejtten*, in the Saxon language, implies to shoot.

So far from not being archers, the Scythian bows were proverbial. (Like a Scythian bow, Strabo.) And in the History of the Saxons, written by Verstegan, we find, by the figures published in that work, that the Saxon arms were spears, halberds, shields, cross-bows, swords, which were broad and curved, something like a scythe (the seaxen), and hatchets or axes, which they called bills.

(22) *Who Odin drove, the father of our race,
From his dominions in the eastern climes. . . p. 422.*

That Odin, the ancestor of the Saxon kings, with his Scythians or Goths, came from the East, is, we conceive, to be clearly proved, by the striking similarity of many of their customs to those of the eastern nations. We shall quote a few, condensing them as closely as possible.

‘If the Saxons sprang from the *Saca-senæ*, who lived near *Persia*, which is the most probable account of their origin, traditions, connected with the battles of Alexander, might have remained with them as with the nations in the east.—*Hist. Anglo-Saxons*.

It seems very plain, from ancient historians, that when Mithridates fled from the Roman armies, under Pompey, into the deserts of Scythia, and stirred up its nations to espouse the cause of liberty, Odin, whose original name was Sigge, joined his forces to those of the king of Pontus; but, being overpowered, withdrew into the north of Europe, and established an empire where the Roman name was unknown.

‘Odin, the great ancestor of the Saxon and Scandinavian chieftains, is represented to have migrated from a city called *Asaland*, which implies the city and land of the *Asæ*, or Asians. The cause of this movement was the Romans; Odin is stated to have moved first into Russia, and thence into Saxony.’—*Hist. Ang.-Sax.*, vol. i.

This Sigge was the warrior, priest, and prophet of his god Odin, whose name he either adopted, to give himself the greater authority, or it was conferred on him by his posterity. It has been reasonably asserted by learned authors, that a desire ‘to be revenged on the Romans was the ruling principle of his whole con-

duct. This leaven, which he left in the bosoms of the northern people, fermented a long time in secret ; but the signal once given, they all fell, as it were, by common consent, upon this unhappy empire ; and, after many repeated shocks, entirely overturned it, thereby revenging the affront offered so many ages before to their founder.

But to return to the customs of the Goths.—Baptism was an eastern rite both of Jews and Gentiles. As a proof of this, it would be useless here to multiply ancient authorities *. This rite was used by the Scandinavians. ‘ I know if I sprinkle a boy with water, he shall not die in war, although he goes to battle.’—Vide the *Edda*.

‘ The Germans dipped their children in the waters of the Rhine.’—See *Pennant*.

The plurality of wives, mentioned before, in which the chief men among the Goths indulged, is another eastern custom, as well as their *Suttees*, or the burning of the favourite wife on the funeral pile of her deceased husband. The Saxons bore on their banners the white horse. The kings of Persia had a white horse led before them. In the Indian mythology, the *white horse* of Crishna was sent out to subdue all nations to his laws. There is another white horse, in the same mythology, with wings of great virtue and power ; being accounted a transformation of Vishnoo. In the Revelations, Death rides on a pale horse. In the more early mythology of Greece (Hes. Theogon.), not the eagle, but *Pegasus*, was the thunder-bearer of Jupiter. ‘ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white horse*, and he that sat on him,’ &c.—*Rev. xix.*

‘ The art of poetry Odin brought from Asia, as, besides other arguments, the very name of it sufficiently sheweth. The ancient SCALDI called it *Asamal*, that is, the language of the Asians. From the sweetness of its running, it was called Odin’s Miod, Odin’s Mead ; and from its copiousness, Odin’s *Æge*, Odin’s Sea.’—*Antiq. et Orig. Sax.*

There are numerous words in the Persian language which are in sound and signification precisely the same in the old English : we will only instance one, *Witten-a-gamote*, which, in both tongues, literally means a national assembly. Huet says, that ‘ the German language bears a great affinity to the Persian. The

* Aristotle says the Celts plunged their infants newly born into cold water.

See also the 122nd Ep. of Gregory to Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans.

cause of this may be imputed to their common origin, from the Scythians.'

The celebrated *ASH*, in the *Edda*, from the roots of which flows a fountain where *wisdom* is concealed, and which communicates with another stream, in which is found the knowledge of things to come, has a striking analogy to the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.

Whence came, but from the East, such words as those in the *Voluspa*, which is of higher antiquity than the *Edda*?

'Then,' that is, after the death of the gods and the conflagration of the world, 'we emerge from the bosom of the waves, an earth clothed with a most lovely verdure. The fields produce their fruits without culture; misfortunes are banished from the world.' Compare this with the passage in Revelations, 'And there was a new heaven and a new earth,' &c. Of the destruction of the present world, the *Voluspa* says, 'The black prince of the genii of fire issues forth from the South, surrounded with flames—the rocks are shaken, and fall to pieces. Men tread in crowds the path of death. The heavens are split asunder.' Again—'The sun is darkened; the sea overwhelms the earth; the shining stars vanish out of heaven; the fire furiously rages; the earth draws to an end.' Let any one compare this with numerous passages in the Bible on the same subject.

But, to end this long note, the Abbé Banier says, that the northern nations borrowed their doctrines either from the Persians or their neighbours.

In the pretended Book of Enoch are many things to be found similar to the fables of the *Edda*. But of all the Theogonies, that of the Chaldees, cited from Berosus by Syncellus, is the nearest, says Mons. Mallet, to the Scandinavian.

(23) *Since you my snow-white shield of expectation
Placed in my hands. . . p. 424.*

'When a young warrior was first enlisted, they gave him a white and smooth buckler, which was called the shield of expectation. This he carried till, by some signal exploit, he obtained leave to have the proofs of his valour engraved on it. For this reason none but princes, or persons distinguished by their services, presumed to carry shields adorned with any symbol.—*North. Antiq.*

- (24) *and girded on my thigh*
The envied sword of knighthood. . . p. 424.

Selden, in his *Titles of Honour*, says, that the origin of chivalry in Germany and Gaul had no sort of reference to the knights of ancient Rome, but must have arisen from themselves, or the other warlike nations of the north.

Knighthood was no new institution of the middle ages.

‘Everything that constituted chivalry’ (confraternité) ‘was established in the North in those early ages, when they had not the least idea of it in the more southern nations.’—Vide *Notes to the History of Charles and Grymer, Swedish kings.*

- (25) *or lose my shield,*
On which thou hast permitted me to bear
The impress of the eagle! . . p. 424.

The shield of the celebrated Saxon idol Irminsula, according to Meibomius, bore a lion in a field of flowers. Jedutt, another Saxon idol, represented an armed man, holding in his right hand a club set with spikes, and in his left a shield, on which was a white horse in a red field.

The banner of that portion of old Saxony called *Ditmarsia*, between the Eyder and the Stoer, had on its field an armed soldier on a white horse.

A hundred other instances might be adduced of *Saxon heraldry*.

- (26) *I have devoted her to Odin's shrine,*
A noble sacrifice. . . p. 426.

‘The Goths sacrificed to Odin not only the vulgar sort of people, but princes and kings; nay, some of their lesser gods while living, as will afterwards appear.’—*Sammes' Antiq. Orig. Sax.*

‘The first king of Vermland was burnt in honour of Odin. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice, to obtain of Odin the victory over Harold.’—*Saxo-Grammat.*

‘Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine sons, to obtain the prolongation of his own life.’—*Worm. Monum. Danic.*

- (27) *Wait on the worshipped maid.* . . p. 426.

All those captives among the Goths, on whom the lot fell to be sacrificed, were treated with honours, and overwhelmed with caresses.

- (28) *But a base niggard slave!* . . p. 426.

'Nothing (modern niggard) was the most opprobrious term that could be used to a person among the Saxons; implying every thing sordid, villanous, base, cowardly, stingy, and infamous.

'We have a remarkable proof, in English history, how much this name was dreaded and abhorred by our ancestors. King William Rufus, having occasion to draw together suddenly a body of forces, only sent word to all such as held him in fee, that those who did not repair to his assistance, should be deemed **NOTHING**; and, without further summons, they all flocked to his standard.'—*Note to North. Antiq., from Matthew Paris.*

- (29) *I vow in solemn awe by my broad shield. . .
Whom I devote to Odin, a redemption
For Imogenia's life!* . . p. 427.

'Military vows did not originate with the Normans. It was usual among all the old warriors of the North, when they undertook any enterprise of moment, at some festival to lift on high their mead-cups, and make a solemn vow, which nothing could afterwards induce them to break. This was called *Atstrenga heit*, to vow on high.'—*Mons. Mallet.*

These northern warriors sometimes devoted *themselves* as a redemption for their country.

- (30) *From Gwynedd and Dehewbarth's mountain-lands.* . . p. 430.
British—South and North Wales.

- (31) *From Pen-cair to Penringhaued's blood-stained cape.* p. 430.
Penringhaued, Land's End, the Bolerium of Ptolemy.

- (32) *Too amiable, enchanting, gallant youth.* . . p. 431.

In Triad 83, Medrawd is spoken of as a most engaging person, to whom it was almost impossible to deny any request.

- (33) *Are hastening to besiege these Roman towers,
And this fair city. . . p. 432.*

This noble city was taken by Kynric, about 552, and the greater part of its inhabitants put to the sword.

- (34) *When comes Midsummer's eve, in every hamlet. . . p. 434.*

For the customs, long continued after Christianity overspread Britain, on Midsummer's night, see a note to the 'Imperial Pirate.'

- (35) *and harp and bagpipe ring
From bower to bower. . . p. 434.*

'In digging under all these foundations to make these various discoveries, was found at the bottom of all a bronze figure of a Roman soldier playing upon a pair of bagpipes. It most clearly ascertains, from the place and manner in which it was found, and the time when it must have been lost, the use and existence, amongst the Romans, of this instrument, on their very first arrival in this island. And the whole is a proof that the bagpipe was originally no *Scotch*, but a Roman instrument; a fact that is also strongly corroborated by the bas-relievo at Rome, mentioned by Dr. Burney, where a Grecian sculptor has given, in like manner, the representation of this instrument.'—*Munimenta Antiqua*.

The bagpipe was an ancient Hebrew instrument, and might have been brought to the Britons, like the eastern harp, by the Phœnicians.

- (36) *With all the mimic pomp of tourney-feats
By mail-accountred knights. . . p. 434.*

Military orders.—'The military diversions of tournaments are not, as they have been generally imagined to be, the invention of these later ages. They were customary among the Britons, as they remained among their descendants of Ireland and Caledonia to the third century. Such schools of war, therefore, king Arthur found already instituted in the provinces; and he seems to have particularly encouraged them. After the great victory which he obtained over the Saxons in the Caledonian forest, he seems to have celebrated a triumphal tournament in the field. And the

small entrenchment which has ditches within the rampart, and is popularly denominated ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE, still remains upon the spot a probable memorial of the fact.'—*Dr. Henry.*

Who can be so weak as to believe, with De St. Palaye, that chivalry cannot be traced further back than the eleventh century, or that such a system should spring up all at once among so many nations of Europe, if they will but attend to what Tacitus says of the customs of the Germans?—'As noble youths advance in age, and acquire esteem, other young warriors attach themselves to them, and *swell their retinue*. Nor does any one blush to be seen among these ATTENDANTS and FOLLOWERS.' Palaye, in his *Memoirs of Chivalry*, says, 'To be thus attached to some illustrious knight, had nothing in it degrading.'—Again, Tacitus says, 'There is great emulation among the followers, who shall stand highest in the prince's or chief's favour; and among the chiefs, who shall have the most *numerous* and valiant attendants.' This was exactly the case among the barons of the middle ages. It is also as plain, 'that vassalage and feudal tenure were established among the *Goths* as among the Normans, their descendants; for if the Gothic chiefs gave not their retainers lands, they gave them war-horses, every kind of arms, and "money-gifts," and always feasted them at their plentiful tables.' It is therefore as silly to suppose chivalry a comparatively modern institution, as it is to believe that armorial bearings were never used previously to the crusades.

(37) *The swan and crane down from their lofty flight. . . p. 434.*

Cranes in large flocks formerly haunted this island, particularly Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.

(38) *Alas ! I, like the ancient victim, stand
Between two dreadful fires ! . . p. 435.*

This alludes to the ancient Celtic and Irish proverb of passing between the fires of Bell or the Sun, used when any person is placed between two trying and difficult situations, like the Scylla and Charybdis of the ancients.

(39) *What though, with all his sword-girt paladins. . . p. 438.*

The Knights of Arthur's Round Table.

- (40) *The summer sun*
Hath dried our cisterns up. . . . 439.

The ancient hill-cities of the Britons, like many of those in the land of Canaan, had in general no fountains, only dry cisterns or pits, to receive and retain the rain which fell from the clouds. Such dry wells we have found still remaining in some of these lofty fortresses.

- (41) *the Cymry, whose forefathers came*
Far o'er the ocean to this blessed isle. . . p. 442.

'The original Cymry came from Deffrobani, over the hazy sea, to the isle of Britain, and to Armorica, where they have remained.'—*Triad 4.*

'Upon their landing in Britain they found it uninhabited, and took a formal possession of it as of original occupation and right. The description given of the island at that time is, that it was full of bears, wolves, and of two other species of animals, denominated by the Triad, *Exainc* and *Ychain banog*. Of these, the former is in use to signify beavers; the latter, literally translated, would be *the oxen with high prominence*.—*Early Hist. of the Cymry.*

- (42) *Behold the badge*
Of our religion on his robes emblazed! . . 443.

Nennius, enumerating the battles of Arthur, says, that in the fight at Castle Gunnion, he had the image of the cross and the St. Mary on his shoulders. And Vincentius, another ancient author, asserts, that on the banner of Arthur was portrayed the Virgin Mary with her son in her arms.

- (43) *Behold his caliburno, blade of fire,*
Blest by the midnight vision of St. Joseph,¹
At his high shrine in Avalonia's isle! . . p. 443.

The sword of Arthur was called *excalibur*, *caliburno*, or *caliburn*, for it is variously spelled. Spenser calls it *Mordure*. His shield is named *Pridwin*, and his spear *Roan*, by the Romance writers. *Avalonia*, or *Isle of Apples*, is the present *Glastonbury*.

- (44) *I have subdued the tyrant of the north,
Huel, my bitterest foe. This blessed sword
Was dimmed with his false blood! . . p. 444.*

Geoffrey of Monmouth says, that Arthur was the son of Uther, the Pendragon or Dictator of the Britons, by an adulterous connexion with Igerna, wife of Gorlois, duke of Cornwall, favoured by the aid of Merlin's magic skill. This is like the rest of his dreamings.

'Arthur also maintained a war against the Britons in the north of this island, and killed Huel their king. He was greatly rejoiced at this success, because, says Caradoc, he had killed his most powerful enemy. Thus Arthur, by his wars with his own countrymen, as much assisted the progress of the Saxons, as he afterwards endeavoured to check it by his struggles with Cerdic.'—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*, vol. i.

- (45) *hung with tapestry of gold. . . p. 453.*

Tapestry was known to the Babylonians. Such hangings were called *Babylonica*; vide Plin. l. viii. c. 48. *Colores diversos pictura intextere*, &c.; Plaut. in *Sticho*. *Babylonica magnifico splendore*; Lucret. l. iv. Among the ancients, garments were curiously woven with various figures, and even historical designs; for Eneas gives to Cloanthus a robe, in which was represented Ganymede's translation to heaven. The curtains of the Hebrew tabernacle were made of fine twined linen of blue, and purple, and scarlet, *with cherubims of cunning work*. It was an art of the highest antiquity, and seems never to have been lost. That it was well known to the Saxons, need no better proof than by referring to their elder writings.

There was then a number
Of men and women
Who in the wine-chamber
Of the great mansion prepared—

There shone, variegated with gold,
THE WEB ON THE WALLS!
Many wonders to the sight of each of the warriors,
That would gaze on it, became visible.

The Saxon Poem of Beowulf.

We have mentioned many other instances, which may be seen in the fourth volume of the *Olio*, p. 169.

- (46) *Not e'en the Berserkir, in battle-hour. . . p. 459.*

The Berserkir of the north adopted the fury of an enraged wild beast, as a most horrible artifice of battle, designed to intimidate the foe. Odin is said to have practised it, and boasted of it as a magical trick. Saxo describes the Berserkir fury in his seventh book, pp. 123-4.

- (47) *Who like me can hurl
His sword and spear into the air, and catch
Their sharp points harmlessly ? . . p. 459.*

The northern warriors 'could have no hope to be acceptable to the women, but in proportion to the courage and address they had shown in war, and in their military exercises.'—*North. Antiq.*, vol. i.

'I know how to perform eight exercises: I fight with courage; I keep a firm seat on horseback; I am skilled in swimming; I glide along the ice on skates; I excel in darting the lance; I am dexterous at the oar; and yet a Russian maid disdains me!'—*Complaint of Harold.*

King, warrior, pirate, and poet were often united in the person of a northern chief.

- (48) *Believe thou still in Him, the awful Sire. . . p. 461.*

No doctrine could be held in higher reverence among the ancient Germans than this—*Regnator omnium Deus, cætera subiecta atque parentia*, says Tacitus.

'All that one can discover, amidst so much darkness, is, that the Scandinavians were not seduced by the impostures of the Asiatic Odin, so far as to be generally persuaded that he was the *supreme God*.'—*Mons. Mallet.*

- (50) *My gallant paladins, knights of the cross,
Your order is the first of Christian faith. . . p. 467.*

No one now pretends to deny the real existence of Arthur, though his character has always appeared through the dim and magnifying mists of romance. We have drawn nothing relating to him from the wild and mythological fables of the *Mabinogion*, but only from those resources which are authentic.

'About the year 516 or 517, Arthur was elected by the states of Britain to exercise sovereign authority, as other princes had been chosen in dangerous times, for his superior bravery and abilities, being till that time only a chieftain of the Silurian Britons. He continued to present a successful opposition to the Saxons, till a fatal dissension broke out between him and Medrod (Medrawd), and which, about the year 540, kindled a civil war, and Medrod joined his power with the Saxons.'—*Rees's Cyclopædia*.

'But this was not enough to diffuse a spirit of gallantry over the kingdom, and kindle a flame of heroism in the nation; for that something else was requisite which should allure, by the novelty of the establishment, and engage by the permanency of reward. This Arthur saw, and established a MILITARY ORDER. It was the first that had ever been instituted in the island; and it has been since imitated by all the nations on the continent. By means of this association, Arthur mixed among the provincials a general glow of ingenuous heroism; the first spirit of chivalry that ever appeared in Europe. The order naturally survived its founder; and the members of it were denominated the warriors of Arthur, though the persons were born half a century after his death.'—*Whitaker*.

'Nothing is more probable, notwithstanding all that has been sneeringly asserted to the contrary, than that Arthur should institute an order of knighthood; for, so far from its being, according to Whitaker, "the first spirit of chivalry that ever appeared in Europe," such a spirit was common among the Germans and Gauls from the earliest periods; and we have already seen that "everything that constituted chivalry was established in the North in the remotest ages." The honour of conferring this dignity on the German *Ritter*, or knight, corresponded exactly, says O'Halloran, with those institutions among the ancient Irish. Arthur only established in Britain what had been for ages the glory of Ireland. For the various orders of Irish knights, see O'Halloran.'—*Hist. of Ireland*.

There was an order of knights, in the seventh century, in France, called the knights of St. Rimini. We also learn, from the Letters of Cassiodorus, that Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, established in Italy an order of chivalry in the same century. See also Dr. Henry.

(51) *Enter several Adelfrunæ or Prophetesses.* . . p. 473.

Johannes Magnes, in speaking of Filemar, hath these words:
'Making inquiry into the customs of his country, he found among

his people a certain sort of cunning women called *ADELRUNÆ*; for, in the Gothic tongue, Runa signifies an art, sometimes, particularly, the art of magic.'—*Aylett Sammes*.

- (52) *The young moon on the evening's raven locks
Her pearly crescent hangs. . . p. 473.*

Clemens Alexandrinus says, that there are among the Germans a sort of women that are called holy, who, observing the heads of rivers, and the sound and rolling of waterfalls, foretell things to come. These women permitted not the Germans to fight with Cæsar until the *new moon*.

'*Adelruna* is nothing, properly, but a learned or literate woman. Runasten, a learned piece of work; runic, a learned copy of verses; but *Adelruna* came to express a witch; runasten, a charm or talismanic figure; and runic, an incantation, in succeeding time.'—*Sammes*.

- (53) *The elements
Speak out the gods' decrees. . . p. 474.*

The Gothic nations 'considered the elements as so many organs by which the Deity manifested his will and his resolves.'—See more of this in the first volume of *Northern Antiquities*.

- (54) *There by me rushed
Sognor, the king of elves. . . p. 475.*

'*Alfur*—by this name the Saxons called their elves, inhabiting rocks and caves; and the sacrifices to them were called *Alfblot*. The Goths called them *Dwergh*, and the Saxons *Dwærg* and *Dwæoph*. The chief of these elves, or fairies, was *Mog Sognor*; the second Durin, &c.; and this imaginary race was divided into Guttels, or Trulls, and Coballs, good and evil spirits.' Hence our word *trull*, for a vagrant strumpet.

'It is the doctrine of the ancient Gothic or northern mythology which has produced all the stories of fairies and the marvellous romances.'—*North, Antiq.*

- (55) *Amid the demon cavern of stern Ochus. . . p. 476.*

Ochus Bochus was a magician and demon among the Saxons,

dwelling in forests and caves; and we have his name and abode handed down to the present day in Somersetshire.

'Where the famed grotto Oehiol is found,
Which does, Parthenope, all thine outdoe.'

Sir Rich. Blackmore's 'King Arthur.'

(56) *I heard the dread night-whistler shriek for blood. . . p. 476.*

'The whistler shrill, that whoso hears doth die.'

Spenser, canto xii.

(57) *and on our banner-staves*

The trophy-scalps of these vile Christians hang ♀. . . p. 476.

'In battle, they (the Scythians) drank the blood of the first enemy whom they mastered. They SCALPED their opponents, and offered their heads to their king,'—(David did the same with that of Goliath)—'and they made drinking-skulls of the greatest of their enemies. IN THESE CUSTOMS OUR GOTHIC ANCESTORS RESEMBLED THEM.'—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*

How similar are all barbarous nations! 'At each of the villages we observed small sticks, of the length of two feet, painted red, stuck in the earth in various situations, but chiefly on the roofs of houses, each bearing the fragment of a human scalp, the hair of which streamed in the winds.'—*James's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains.*

(58) *The milk-white prophet steed, by torch-beam led,
Hath all the spears, arranged on yonder plain,
Passed with propitious omen. . . p. 478.*

When war was designed against any nation, says Cranzius and Saxo-Grammaticus, they set up three rows of spears, with others across them. Then the white horse was led out towards them by the priests: if he passed them with the right foot forward, it was accounted as a propitious omen; but if he once, in passing them, put his left foot foremost, they gave up their intended enterprise.

(59) *May Nocca, spirit of the watery realms,
Feed on my veins. . . p. 480.*

'Nicksa, Neccus, or Nocca, an ocean god.'—*Wormius, Mon.,*
l. i. c. 4.

In Denmark he was called Nicken, and said to frequent not only the sea, but rivers and deep brooks, in the shape of a sea-monster with a man's head. If a man was drowned, it was a common saying, 'Nicken hath sucked him.' Hence comes our sailor's phrase, 'Old Nick.'

- (60) *Thy blood with mine shall in the wine-cup mingle,
In which our swords we'll dip.* . . p. 480.

In Lucian's Dialogue, entitled 'Toxaris,' or 'Friendship,' Toxaris says, when we have cut our fingers, and the blood flows into a cup, and we have dipped the points of our swords into it, and, lifting the cup, have drunk both together, there is nothing can divide us.

Herodotus says, speaking of the Scythians, that those who form a league of friendship, make, with a knife or sword, a gash in their bodies; then they dip their weapons into the cup, and, with solemn oaths, drink the wine and blood; and not only they who make the league, but also the followers of the chiefs.

- (61) *From his refulgent mail of ring-wrought steel.* . . p. 485.

That the Anglo-Saxons wore ring or chain mail, though the contrary is asserted, is sufficiently evident from their own writings.

'The mail shone upon him; the *heavy net* was linked by the smith's care.' 'My *braided* battle-garment adorned with gold.' 'The *net of iron*.'—*Saxon Poems*.

- (62) *May the dark prince,
That o'er the genii reigns of scorching fire.* . . p. 486.

Surtur.—Vide the *Edda*.

- (64) *Dance to the god-scald's harp beneath the ash.* . . p. 486.

Braga was the god of the Scalds, or music.

All the leading ideas of this speech are to be found in the Scandinavian mythology, the greater portion of which, from its very nature, must have been brought by Odin and his followers from the East, let who will assert the contrary.

- (65) *and fling abroad*
The battle-summons from the brazen throat
Of the deep-thundering dudag. . . p. 488.

See General Vallancy.

- (66) *And by the holy sangreal, blood of Christ. . . p. 489.*

Arthur is said to have sent one of his knights on an adventure for the sangreal, or the vial which was supposed to contain the **REAL BLOOD**.

- (67) *That we, the mighty, should the weak subdue. . . p. 490.*

'The Gothic nations looked upon war as a real act of justice, and esteemed force an incontestable title over the weak, a visible mark that God had intended to subject them to the strong. The weak had no right to what they could not defend.'—*North. Antiq.*

- (68) *Where the huge Colgrin fell beneath my sword. . . p. 491.*

'He routed Colgrin, the Saxon Duke, and all his forces, consisting of Saxons, Scots, and Piets, who were committing ruin and devastation in Britain. He took their camp, and slew Colgrin and another leader.'—*Rees's Cyclopædia*.

- (69) *And why not claim my kingrick, too, of Kent ? . . p. 491.*

The old Teutonic word *rick* is still preserved in the termination of our English *bishoprick*. Stubbs, in his libel, 'The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf,' &c., imprinted 1579, says, 'The queen has the *kingrick* in her own power.'

- (70) *yon temple-rocks*
Are yet encrimsoned with your fathers' gore ! . . p. 492.

King, speaking of Stonehenge, says, 'No place surely was so fit to assemble both Vortigern and his train of chieftains, for the purpose of a solemn treaty, as that *high-place*, where the Britons had so often been accustomed to assemble on their most awful public occasions.'

(71) *Ye prophet-matrons, chant the battle-song! . . p. 492.*

Aventinus, giving a description of the priestesses (lib. i.), and of their cutting the throats of the captives, and receiving the blood in a large cauldron, says, in the midst of the fight they used to strike upon skins stretched over their waggons, which produced a fearful and tremendous sound. Strabo (lib. vii.) says the same; but both these authors are describing the customs of the *Cimbrians*, or *Kimmerians*, a distinct race from the *Goths*, or *Scythians*. Be it as it may, the drum was not unknown to the Saxons, for Bede clearly describes it as a tense leather, stretched on two cones joined together, which resound on being struck.

'Going to battle, they invoked the name of Odin, and sung hymns to his praise.'—*Mallet*.

William of Malmesbury speaks of the war-song (cantilena) of Roland, which was 'sung at the battle of Hastings by the Normans. Strutt, in his 'Sports and Pastimes,' says, that the celebrated minstrel, Taillefer, appeared at the head of the Conqueror's army, singing the songs of Charlemagne.

(72) *Hurl at thee defiance!—Ha! ha! ha!—(Dies.) . . p. 493.*

'It shall hereafter be recorded in history, that king Halfer died laughing.'—*Barthol.*, p. 6.

King Regner died singing the pleasure of falling in battle: his words are, 'The hours of my life are passed away, I shall die laughing.'

Saxo, speaking of a single combat, says, one of the champions **FELL, LAUGHED, and DIED.** To die with his arms in his hands, was the vow of every freeman. They considered slavery as the most dreadful of all conditions. Frotho, a Danish king, when taken in battle, obstinately refused all offers of life. 'To what end,' said he, 'should I reserve myself for so great a disgrace?—Future ages would say, **FROTHO HAS BEEN TAKEN BY HIS ENEMY!**'

Olave, king of Norway, when fighting with Sevin, king of Denmark, finding his ship surrounded, rather than be a prisoner, leaped into the sea, and perished.

(73) *Who on the shores of every land in Europe
Have made all nations quake. . . p. 494.*

'The Saxon exploits on the ocean inflicted such wounds on the Roman colonies and commerce, that a peculiar fleet was appointed

to counteract them. Every historian mentions them with dread and hatred.'—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*

Zosimus says, the Saxons, for courage of mind, strength of body, and the enduring of toil, are renowned above all the Germans. Marcellinus says they are dreadful to the Romans. Sidonius Apollinaris gives a woeful account of their piratical incursions. (Lib. viii., Epist. ad Numantium.)

'We can speak more decidedly on the part of our ancestors, the Saxons, who seem to have been skilful in the management of the *sling*.'—*Strutt's Sports and Pastimes.*

(74) *A kingly soldier's burial shall be thine. . . p. 495.*

Another proof of their Asiatic origin.—'Woden enacted a law, that the dead should be burnt with all their moveables; deeming that they would be more welcome to the gods, with whose corpse the fire consumed most goods.'—*Sammes.*

Alfred, in his Voyage of Ohthere to the North Pole, gives a most interesting account of the manner of burning the dead among the Gothic tribes of Eastland.

'Odin introduced new customs, attended with more magnificence. In the succeeding ages they were wont to raise funeral piles, and reduce the bodies to ashes, which were collected together into an urn, and deposited under a mound of earth.'—*North. Antiq.*

'Eat over the solitary wanderer unmourningly. Mark my hillock with the simple flower.'—*Saxon Poem.*

(75) *So fare thee well.
I've won a brave revenge! . . p. 496.*

'Arthur perished at last ingloriously, in a civil feud with Medrawd his nephew, who is said to have engrossed the affections of Gwennyfar.'—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*, vol. i.

(76) *the wild harp's song
Will be of my return from fairy-land. . . p. 498.*

'Arthur, mortally wounded, was carried out of the field, and committed to the care of his friends at Glastonbury. The death of Arthur was long concealed, and a wild tale diffused among the populace, that he had withdrawn from the world into some magical

region, from which, at a future crisis, he was to reappear, and lead the Cymry in triumph through the island.'—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.*

In the year 1189 his tomb was discovered in the abbey of Glastonbury. Giraldus says he saw and handled the inscription, 'Hic jacet sepultus in cytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avallonia.'

See a fac-simile of this inscription in Gibson's Camden, and also in Whitaker.

(77) *May the night-hag fasten on him ! . . p. 498.*

'MARA was their (the Saxons') night-hag: hence they said *Maren rider ham*. And to this day some superstitiously take the disease ephialtes, or the oppression of the chest, for a witch or goblin, and call it the night-mare.'—*Antiq. et Orig. Sax.*

(78) *Or the fierce bison, with his shaggy mane. . . p. 502.*

'The wild bull, the bison, bonassus, or buffalo, fierce and savage, with a hanging mane like a lion, was a native of the British forests. Fitz-Stephens says, that in his time (*the twelfth century*) these animals roamed at large in the immense forest of Middlesex.'—*Vide Fitz-Stephens's Descrip. of Lond., p. 26, ed. 1772.*

(79) *and yell, and hiss,
Came from their stony lips, with words unholy. . . p. 506.*

The religion of the Saxons, says Sharon Turner, appears to have attained a regular establishment, and much ceremonial pomp. When they settled in Britain they had idols, altars, temples, and priests.

'It should seem the idols, or statues themselves of the gods, delivered these oracles *vivâ voce*. Thorstein, says an Icelandic chronicle, entered a temple, in which was a stone statue; he prostrated himself before it, and prayed it to inform him of his destiny. The stone chaunted forth these verses.'

(80) *But here I pray by Irminsul's red banner. . . p. 511.*

This celebrated idol, whose name is variously spelt, seems to have been a principal god among the Saxons on the continent. His temples were spacious and magnificent. Sharon Turner observes, 'Our ancient Irmin-street has been conjectured to have

been derived from the name of this idol. If so, the inference would be reasonable, that it was worshipped also in England.'

- (81) *Into his paradise the maid receive
With all the pomp of heaven. . . p. 512.*

'Odin excluded from his paradise all women who did not, by some violent death, follow their deceased husbands.'—*Cox's Fem. Script. Biog.*, vol. ii.

- (82) *Call every priest
And prophet-matron to the solemn scene. . . p. 513.*

'It is a most remarkable fact, that an instance existed of a human sacrifice in the northern parts of this island, even so late as the ninth century, about the year 893. When Einar, thane of Caithness, had taken captive Haldanus, prince of Norway, a sacrifice was prepared with horrible solemnity; and Haldanus, the destined victim, was made an offering to Odin; and on his remains a tumulus of stones was raised to perpetuate the memory of the event.'—Published at the end of *Cordiner's Antiquities of Scotland*.

In the western parts of Iceland, in the province of Thornesthing, there is a circle of stones, where tradition has still preserved the record, that men were sacrificed, after they had been killed, at a vast stone placed therein.

- (83) *Fling on the pyre
The regal banner and the golden shield,
The glittering mail, the gore-empurpled robe. . . p. 515.*

'Hialmar's warriors interred the dead body of their chief, and buried his gold along with it.'—*Hist. of Charles and Grymer, &c.*

The burrows in Russian Tartary have been found to contain great treasures, and garments covered with gold. The bones of the war-horse of Childeric, king of the Franks, were found in his tomb. Slaves and wives were sacrificed on the funeral rug of the northern warriors, that they might enter, with all due pomp, the halls of Odin.

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